

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

AND

How to Be Kept In
Perfect Peace

By

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(CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE)

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

The message I feel led to bring to you this morning is not a great, profound truth that will lift you up into the third heaven. In fact, it is just a corn bread sermon-a real, practical, down-to-earth truth. I feel very definitely, however, that the Lord would have us consider it together this morning. The message is based on an incident that is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the 15th chapter, and I begin reading with the 35th verse. I trust that you will listen very carefully to the reading of the Word, because it's possible that you have never heard this passage of Scripture read as a lesson for a sermon.

"Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

"And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

"But Paul thought it not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

"And the contention was so sharp between them,

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Nark, and sailed unto Cyprus "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

I want to especially call your attention to the statement found in the 39th verse where it says "And the contention was so *sharp* between them, and they departed asunder one from the other." I realize that is a very strange text for a fellow to take in a Holiness meeting. It's entirely possible that you have never heard this text used in your life; and yet, this Scripture that I have read, and this incident that we are told about, is a part of the inspired record that God has handed down to us. We are told that all Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for instruction, in order that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished in the work of God. I think this incident and some truths that are suggested by it will be profitable for us to consider, and not only to think about now, but to take home with us, and remember in the days to come.

Here we have the record of two great *saints*. *They were real saints*-real people of God, thoroughly saved, and thoroughly sanctified. Both of them filled with perfect love, both of them loving not only God, but loving each other. There isn't any question about their spiritual standing, because the Bible says that Barnabas was a *good man*, and when God bears witness to a fact that a man is a good man, then he is *a good man*. And St. Paul is recognized as one of

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

the greatest saints that the church ever produced. He could testify, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." He could testify that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus "hath made me free from the law of sin and death." He could testify to the Romans, "I am sure that when I come to you, I will come *in the fulness of the blessing* of the Gospel of Christ." There isn't any question about these men being right with God, and there isn't any question about them being right with each other. They loved each other devotedly. Paul was especially indebted to Barnabas, because Barnabas was the man who brought him out of obscurity and introduced him to the Christian church.

Next to Jesus Christ, I imagine St. Paul was about as deeply indebted to Barnabas as to any living man of that day. These two good men, sanctified men, men who were wholly given to God, either one of them would have been willing to have surrendered his life for the cause of Christ, I imagine either one of them would have been willing to have died for the other, and yet, they had a *disagreement*. They didn't see eye to eye. You remember that Paul decided they ought to make a return visit to the churches where they had preached the Gospel, and he said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and see how the churches are getting along." And it says that Barnabas *determined*. Did you notice that? He *determined* that John Mark should go

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

with them, but Paul *thought it not good*. Notice the difference. Paul thought it not good to take him with them, because on the other trip he had showed the yellow streak. When the battle got hot, he had turned around and gone back home. And Paul didn't think it was a good idea to take a quitter along. And so he said, "No, I don't think we should take John Mark." And Barnabas said, "Well, I think we should." And Paul said, "I don't think we should." And Barnabas said, "Well, if he doesn't go, I'm not going." Then Paul said, "Well, if he does go, I'm not going." And it says *the contention was sharp between them* to the extent they departed asunder. One went one way, and another went the other. Please get this, *Paul did not go off in a huff*. It says, he went being *recommended* by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Now, they both had the blessing. But they just didn't see eye to eye. And, friends, holiness people don't always see eye to eye. You don't always see things the same way. A sanctified man and his wife don't always see the same way. And the fact that a person is sanctified doesn't mean that he'll see everything as you do. And it doesn't mean that you'll see everything just as he does. And the fact that he doesn't see just as you do, doesn't mean that he is full of *carnality*. We're inclined to think that if everybody doesn't agree with us, they are just being bullheaded, and that it is a mark of carnality. But a person can be sanctified wholly, their motives pure as sunlight, and still not see eye to eye with you.

These men not only loved God, they not only loved

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

each other, but they loved the cause of Christ. And their motives in dealing with the problem were just as pure as sunlight. One of them was looking at it from one angle, and the other was looking at it from another angle. Barnabas no doubt said, "Now, here's a fine young fellow. He has great possibilities in him, and wonderful promise. He could make a great preacher." And he did make a great preacher. He wrote one of the four Gospels.

Barnabas said, "Now, he did fail us the other time, but I think we ought to give him another chance. I don't think we should cast him off just because he failed one time." And Paul said, "Well, now maybe that's right." But he said, "Listen, there is a lot involved in this thing. This is the cause of Jesus Christ that we are representing. We can't afford to take any chances on a fellow who might fail us and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ, and I don't think we ought to take him." You see their motives were perfectly pure. There wasn't anything selfish in it. It wasn't a matter of just having your way, it was a matter of seeing a thing from different angles.

Holiness people do that quite often. You can get in a trustees' meeting, or a Board of Stewards' meeting, where one fellow has one idea and another has another idea. Or you can get into a meeting of the Woman's Society of Christian Service or the Missionary Society, and one lady has one idea and the other has another.

You know we holiness people are pretty set in our ways. When we get a thing fixed in our craw,

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

we're inclined to fight and bleed for it. And that's a commendable thing. That's one thing I like about the holiness people. They take this thing of being religious seriously. I said to a District Superintendent in my conference, who made fun of second blessing holiness and scoffed and sneered at holiness, even though he treated me royally: "Moses, you scoff and sneer at second blessing holiness, but I notice that when it comes to making appointments you get more second blessing holiness men in your district than any other man in the cabinet." I said, "Why is that?" He threw his head back and laughed and said: "These holiness cranks take this thing seriously. They are in dead earnest about it. I can get one of those fellows and put him out yonder on a circuit and he will start to work like a beaver. I can go fishing and he will do the job anyway. I don't care what he believes, I just want to get the job done." I laughed and said, "Well, that's a kind of a left-handed compliment, but it is a compliment." I'm glad that holiness people do take this thing seriously. We just can't give in over every little thing without thinking pretty seriously about it. So we see Barnabas had one idea and Paul had another idea. And the contention was sharp and they parted company.

Now it happened in this instance they were contending *over an opinion*. *Not a conviction*, but an opinion. One had one opinion and the other had another opinion. There is a difference between *convictions* and *opinions*. That's something holiness people need to see. It's helped me a great deal in my preach-

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

ing, as a pastor and as an evangelist, to recognize that there is a difference between a conviction and an opinion. I have a few deep-seated convictions that I'd die for. If a man should stick a double-barrel shotgun up in my face and say, "Now you are going to quit preaching second blessing holiness or I'll blow your brains out", I'd say, "Brother, you might just as well pull the trigger because I don't intend to quit." I couldn't quit. I'd be a traitor to my own convictions if I quit preaching it because I am convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that it's God's word, and that it is God's will, and it's God's plan. But I have a lot of opinions that I wouldn't fight for. Some of them may not be worth a dime a dozen. There are a lot of people who have never come to see the difference between an opinion and a conviction, and sometimes they get to fighting for their opinions.

For instance, when I first got into the holiness movement up in North Carolina they were having a terrific battle over stockings. The women were having a battle over stockings. There was a black stocking crowd and a white stocking crowd. The black stocking crowd thought the white stocking crowd was worldly and godless, and the white stocking crowd thought the black stocking crowd were fanatics, if nothing else. And they just fought and wrangled and pulled hair over stockings. Well, now, the truth of the matter is, Mary, the mother of Jesus, didn't wear any kind of stockings. They didn't have stockings back in those days. I'm not contending that you ladies should stop wearing stockings, but they just didn't have stockings back in those days,

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

I have heard some evangelists get up and pitch and rear like a blind dog in a meat-house over women wearing toeless shoes. Well, now, they wore sandals in the days of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, wore sandals. I don't have any idea she painted her toenails red, but I imagine they were showing.

Now there are a lot of opinions. I have a good friend up in North Carolina, whom I love like a brother and with whom I have worked through the years, but we don't see eye to eye about things. I remember one day in a sermon he made the statement that any woman who wears her sleeves above her elbows is not sanctified. He said, "I don't care what she professes, she just hasn't got it." Well, a few days after that I was preaching on leprosy as a type of sin, and I was trying to bring out that no one but the High Priest could say who was a leper and who wasn't. You couldn't say, and your neighbor couldn't say, whether you were a leper or not; you had to go to the High Priest and let him say. Then I tried to make the application that God had a divinely appointed agent that is to convict us of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. God hasn't left it up to your neighbors to say, or hasn't left it up to you to say, you are supposed to lay your heart bare before the Holy Ghost and let Him say. In the course of my message, knowing that my friend and I loved each other enough that I could afford to say it, I turned to him and said, "Brother, you said something the other day I wish you hadn't said. You had no business saying it." I said, "You weren't preaching the gospel when you made that statement.

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

You were merely expressing your own personal *opinion*." I said, "You have a right to your own opinion, everyone has a right to their own opinion, but since when did God make you the judge of who's got the blessing and who hasn't?" I said, "Thank God, there's going to be an older fellow at the gate than you or me." I thank God there's going to be somebody pass on me besides people. They don't know my motives. They don't know my heart. I thank God that when I stand there before the judgment bar that I'm going to be judged by Him, who loved me and gave Himself to die for me, that He might purify and make me holy.

Why, if I followed all the ideas people have about how I ought to dress I would be a freak. I'd be ridiculous. I'd be a laughingstock. I preached in Reading, Pennsylvania, some years ago, and there was a fellow attending that meeting, who went barefooted even though it was the middle of the winter with snow on the ground. He had long hair and a long beard and claimed to be a Nazarite. Not a Nazarene, but a Nazarite. He tried his best to convince me that I ought to let my hair grow out, my beard grow out, and that I ought to take off my shoes and go barefooted to be a true Nazarite. Some fellows say you mustn't wear buttons. Some fellows say you ought to turn your vest backwards, and this and that and the other. We all have our opinions.

Paul and Barnabas had their opinion about John Mark. St. Paul recognized his mistake later. He saw that he had misjudged John Mark, and he said, "Bring John Mark with you for he is profitable unto

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

me." You know, brother, that's the thing that really proves you've got the blessing. When you're big enough to see that you were mistaken, that you were not infallible, that you erred in judgment, when you can just stand up and say, "You were right and I'm wrong." What a wonderful thing it would be if more of us had that kind of grace. But the thing I'm trying to get you to see is that both of these fellows had the blessing. They were sanctified, they weren't full of carnality, and they were not contending for their own way, but they were honest. They loved each other and they loved God. They loved John Mark, but one looked at it one way and the other another way.

Good holiness people do that. The world sometimes criticizes us because we don't always agree. Some holiness people get confused and think just because everybody on the Board doesn't see like they do, they think well, they haven't got the blessing, they are backsliders. Listen, when you go back home, recognize that you may be as pure as sunlight in your heart, and your motives may be as pure as the love of God can make them, but you may be mistaken, and your judgment may not be the best. Be big enough to give in to the other fellow sometimes. Just recognize that you don't have to fight for every opinion you have. The other fellow may have one that is better. When you give in you are not a compromiser; you are being sensible and religious. We need a lot of that in the holiness movement today.

In the last charge I served before I went into

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

full time evangelistic work, the church was split wideopen over the building of a parsonage. They had built a beautiful parsonage just before I went there. The man who was pastor at that time had a large family of children, either nine or eleven, I don't remember which. But he wanted to build a ten-room house, and he built it-a great big thing. Man, when we got there, we just rattled around in it like buckshot in a dish pan. In fact, we asked another family to move in to help us occupy the thing. Now, some of the people on the charge wanted to build a good house, but they didn't feel they needed a ten room house. And they said, "Why, you're the only preacher in the whole conference who has a family that large, and another man might come along here with a wife and maybe one or two children. Let's build an eight-room house." And, of course, some people sided with him, and some sided against him. They built the ten-room house, but he split the church wide-open. When I went there, they had two Woman's Societies in the church. They wouldn't work with each other. And people had let that thing come in until it had caused a split that caused them to teach their children to hate one another. We had to have a revival to get it out. But, thank God, one Sunday morning the Holy Ghost fell, and melted people's hearts. They fell on one another's neck, cried, and confessed and begged one another's pardon. It fell about 11:30 A.M., and we stayed until 2:30 P.M., celebrating. You know, friends, sometimes in camp meetings, if something like that could happen, the Spirit of God could fall on us like Dr. Anderson

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

was talking last night, until it melted our hearts, melted our wills and melted our determination, then we would love one another whether we saw alike or not.

GET RID OF PREJUDICES

There are two other incidents in the New Testament that tie in pretty well with this incident. They are very suggestive. One of them is the case of Peter. You remember after the Day of Pentecost, after Peter got the blessing, after he was wholly sanctified, God had some seekers down in Caesarea. A fellow named Cornelius and his whole household had been praying until their prayers had reached heaven. As Dr. Anderson brought out so strikingly last night, God listened. Their prayers had gone up as a memorial before God. Cornelius in his house built a monument that, in heaven, God looked at. He sent an angel down and said, "Now, you go up to Joppa and you'll find a preacher." But while the Lord was down at Cornelius' house, he was also up in Joppa, because there was some work that needed to be done on Peter. He had the blessing, he had a pure heart, his heart had been cleansed from inbred sin, but had a lot of *prejudices* that he had inherited, that had been instilled in childhood. He just couldn't see how the Gentiles could possibly get the blessing. He didn't feel that he was called to preach to the Gentiles. Christ had given him the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven with the understanding that whoever he let in was to be let in, whoever was shut out would be shut out. But he said, "I'm not interested in these

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

Gentiles. I'm not going to go down there and preach to them. Now, brother, somebody else can do that." God got him up on the housetop and he got to praying. When a fellow gets to praying, then God can talk to him. You know, prayer is a two-way proposition. You talk to Him and He'll talk to you. It is just as important to listen to Him as it is for Him to listen to you. It is just as important for you to be willing to do what He asks you to do, as it is for you to want Him to do what you ask Him to do. The Lord gave Peter a vision of a sheet let down from heaven with all kinds of creeping things in it, and the Lord said, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Peter, being a strict Jew, stepped back and said, "Lord, I'll have you to understand I never tasted anything common or unclean in my life. I'm a strict Jew." And the Lord said, "Don't you call anything common or unclean that *I have cleansed*." And he did that three times. And Peter said, "I came to see God is no respecter of persons. He that feareth God and serves him is accepted of him." Peter went to Cornelius and preached, and they had a second Pentecost, because he got the prejudices knocked out of him. You know, there is a difference between God fixing up our hearts and fixing up our heads. Uncle Buddy Robinson said one time, "When God gets ready to fix up a man's heart, he puts it on a lightning express and sends it through a non-stop flight, but sometimes he brings our head through on a slow freight with a lot of stops on the sidings on the way." And that's true.

One morning about one o'clock up yonder in Old

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

Rutherford College in North Carolina, God poured His Holy Spirit out into my soul, and the refining fires burned out the dross and consumed the impurities until there was nothing there but perfect love and perfect peace. I know it happened. But, friends, I know that for more thirty-two years he has been working on this old head of mine, and it still has a lot of kinks in it. I imagine if you will examine yourself pretty closely, you will find that you have some prejudices in you. It may be some secondhand notions that have been handed down to you by other people. There are a lot of people to whom you can just say "Democrat" and they are ready to jump down your throat. You can just say "Republican" to others and they are ready to climb your frame.

I was in Missouri sometime ago, and I was getting my tank filled up with gas. I have a keen sense of humor. As the old fellow was filling up my tank, I told him a joke I had heard about a preacher, who attended a Republican banquet, and was asked to return thanks. He said, "I beg to be excused." And the toastmaster said, "Well, why not? You're a preacher and you're supposed to pray whenever you are called on." And the preacher said, "Well, I have two good reasons. In the first place, I don't think it would do any good. In the second place, I don't want the Lord to know I'm here." Well, I told this joke to this old fellow, and he said, "Hum", and I saw it hit him wrong. He was a Republican and he couldn't laugh at a Republican joke. I laughed and said, "Now, brother, that's one of those jokes you can turn around and tell it either way." I said, "It

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

will work just as good on the Democrats as it will on the Republicans, and just as good on the Baptists as it will on the Methodists." I said, "It's just one of those jokes that can be made to fit any group of people." When he saw the point, he threw his head back and yelled, and said, "Boy, you just wait until old Tom Brown comes back up here, I'll sure burn him down." But you see, he was so narrow in his political affiliations that he couldn't even laugh at a joke on his crowd. We all have a good many prejudices. And listen, friends, we have to be mighty careful. Don't you get the idea that your crowd is the only crowd, and that God doesn't love anybody but your little church. He said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold."

I had a lady come up to me over here in Bradentown sometime ago. She said, "Do you think a Calvinist could be saved?" "Why," I said, "certainly, sister, multitudes of them are saved, and some of them are sanctified." Their hearts are a lot better than their theology. And I believe that. I believe a Roman Catholic could be saved and sanctified. In fact, some of the great saints of the past were members of the Roman Catholic Church. But you know, friends, you can be blinded by your prejudices. Actually, I've seen people in the Holiness churches who couldn't possibly see how a man could be in the Methodist Church and have the blessing. "There must be some question somewhere-there must be something wrong with you, brother. Surely you're not true."

Peter is not the only fellow who needed to have the race prejudices knocked out of him. There are

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

many professing Christians today that need to have a vision that will bring them to see that *God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth*. We need to see that God loves all mankind regardless of the color of their skin or the place where they live. We must come to see that we can't hate any person of another race and still have the love of God in our hearts. We must come to see that Christ taught that we are to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. We can't treat our fellow man, of another color or creed, with contempt and still have the love of God in our hearts. If there ever was a time when people needed to learn this great lesson it is today.

I recognize that this matter of desegregation is a big one and there is no easy solution to it. I recognize that we have all types of people to deal with and you can't settle the thing by just saying, presto change, and it will be done. It is going to take time and patience to work it out in many places in the South, as well as in the North, but I am saying that if we are really Christian then we will treat every man as a brother, and will give him the proper respect and treat him with courtesy and love. If you don't do that then you will soon find that you are out of step with the Christ, who came to die for all mankind. May God help us to get rid of all such narrow views, and bring us to the place where we can be as Christ would have us be.

Many people are like Peter in that they have had these prejudices handed down to them. They have been taught to many people by their parents.

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

It is too bad that so many people follow blindly along such lines. We must have a vision that brings us into line with the Lord of our life.

INFLUENCED BY OTHER PEOPLE

Now the Lord had to knock the prejudices out of Peter. But you know, even after that, even after that great experience at Joppa, and down in Caesarea, when God poured His Spirit on Cornelius and his household, Peter went to Antioch and at first he started associating with the Gentiles and eating with them. But, you know, there were some straight-laced Judaizers who came down there. Brother, they were strict. They hewed to the line. They said, "You can't get in unless you're circumcised. You can't get in unless you keep the law. You can't get in unless you do this and that and the other. Anybody who associates with the uncircumcised hasn't got the blessing." Now listen, friends, we holiness people had better watch out right there.

I was at Sharon Center Camp some years ago. Jimmy Gibson was the young people's worker. He said he stopped in a drug store to get something and one of the girls at the counter, who was smoking a cigarette, had rouge all over her face, and lipstick, looked like one-fourth inch thick, said, "I think I will go out to the Holiness Camp Meeting tonight." And another girl looked at her, and said, "You go out to the Holiness Camp Meeting, painted up like that! Why, they wouldn't let you in!" Whenever the world gets to feeling that way about us, we'd better go somewhere and get down and pray. We don't have

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

to become like the world, and dress like the world. But listen, friends, Jesus sat down on a well curb and talked to a woman who had had a number of husbands, and was living in open adultery. And He could look on a woman who bathed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, and say, "Neither do I condemn you." He could look at a woman who had been taken in open adultery and brought to Him to be condemned. He said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

He doesn't want us to be of the world, but we are IN the world, and we're to be the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and the SALT OF THE EARTH. God wants to rub us in on people. God wants to make us a blessing to people. He doesn't want us to organize a "holier than thou club", and build a ten-foot fence around us and put a three-strand barbed wire on top and place five guards at the gate to keep everybody out who doesn't have the blessing. He wants us to tear down the fence and go out into the highways and hedges, and hunt people who are bound by sin.

But Peter let the pressure get him. And you know the pressure can get pretty strong sometime. You have to have grit in your craw, and iron in your blood, and you have to have a backbone like a steel girder to be true to God in the Holiness Movement. A lot of people think if they just get in the Holiness Movement, all their battles will be over. No, they won't. There will be pressures brought to bear on you in the Holiness Movement. And if you're not mighty careful, they can swing you off and get you out of the will of God, and get you to doing things

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

that will drive people from Christ instead of leading them to Him. Peter quit associating with the Gentiles. Paul in his letter to the church of Galatia said, "I WITHSTOOD HIM TO HIS FACE, FOR HE WAS TO BLAME." They are still sanctified. Both of them have the blessing, but Paul said, "I withstood him to his face, for he was to blame. He was wrong."

Now listen, friends, that time Paul was right. And he wasn't contending for an idea that time. He was contending for a great eternal *principle*, a great eternal truth. In fact, he was contending for the basic truth of the Christian religion, and THAT IS SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, and FAITH ALONE. Paul stood up and went to the church at Jerusalem, and they had a church council, and he wouldn't back down a bit. If Paul hadn't had the moral stamina, and the intensity of purpose to have taken his stand on that great eternal truth of salvation by grace through faith, then the church would have been wrecked. If Paul had tacked circumcision, and this thing and that thing, and the other thing, onto salvation, the church would have been crippled and paralyzed.

Friends, you may run me off before this camp is over, but listen, we holiness people need to keep that great eternal truth, the simple truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our thinking. If we don't mind we can become legalistic. We can begin to tag this thing and that thing, and the other thing onto salvation, and make it a necessity of getting saved, and we can build up barriers and keep people out of the Kingdom of God. You've got to do this and you've

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

got to do that, and you've got to do the other.

A lady down at Miami, at the Central Church of the Nazarene, told Mrs. Church and me that when she was a girl a beautiful little girl came to the altar seeking Christ. Her heart was broken and she was weeping her way to God. But she had NATURALLY CURLY HAIR. It was just naturally curly, in ringlets all over her head. And some evangelist (thank God, I don't know who he was-I don't want to know who he was) went down and took hold of one of those curls and pulled down and said, "Daughter, if you want to get right with God, go home and get the kinks out of your hair, and then come back and find God." Now, can you imagine Jesus dealing with a seeker like that? *Think of it!*

I remember a number of years ago, when I was a worker at this camp, there lived in this town at that time a man and his wife named Cox. I learned to know them at Asbury College. They were devout, consecrated people. They lived here in Lakeland, and they had a neighbor who lived close to them for whom they had been praying for years, that God would open his eyes and that he would see his need of salvation. They had begged him time after time to come to this camp meeting. And he came. I'll never forget it. He sat right back there where that gentleman is sitting by that post. I'll never forget I preached that night on the blood of Jesus Christ. When I gave the invitation he didn't wait for them to sing the second verse. He started down the aisle with the tears streaming down his cheeks. He hadn't been to church in years. He knelt over here and was

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

praying earnestly; when two young fellows, who were earnest, who were sincere, but who had more zeal than judgment, got down to pray with him. One of them happened to spy a package of "Camels" in his shirt pocket. Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not upholding tobacco nor making any defense for tobacco. But those two boys jumped on that fellow about the package of cigarettes in his shirt pocket. They got to arguing with him, and he became so indignant that he walked down the aisle and said, "I'll never come back again." Now, of course, he did wrong, but he was a sinner, blinded by sin. He shouldn't have taken that kind of attitude; but, friends, I firmly believe that if those boys had told him that God loved him, that Jesus Christ had died for him, that the Holy Ghost could help him, and that he could get victory through faith in Christ, and had gotten him saved, and then let God talk to him about the cigarettes, it would have been far better.

But Paul was contending for a great eternal principle. Now listen, friends, it is a principle. The Gospel is GOOD NEWS. The Christian religion is the only religion in the world that offers salvation from sin *by faith and faith alone*. The vilest sinner who walks the face of this earth today can come to God repenting of his sins and saying, "In my hand no price I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me", and have his sins forgiven, the shackle broken, and be liberated and brought to live for Christ because he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Paul stuck by his guns because he

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

was contending for a principle.

This truth of salvation by grace through faith is the very heart of the Christian religion. When you cut that out, then you cut the heart out of the Gospel. The Christian religion is the only religion in the world that offers salvation by faith and faith alone. All the other religions of the world are religions of works. The Christian religion says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *shalt be saved*. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." This is the heart of the Gospel. This is the good news. I fear that much of the preaching that we hear today is not the Gospel. It, in many instances, is made up of a lot of *opinions*, that people have collected and they label them the Gospel, but it is not the Gospel.

I believe in repentance with all of my heart. I preach on repentance. In fact, I don't believe that anyone can exercise saving faith in Christ until they have first truly and earnestly repented of their sins. Faith is of the heart. It is with the heart that man believes unto salvation. Saving faith is more than just giving mental assent to a body of truths. IT IS SURRENDERING YOURSELF TO A PERSON.

I believe in restitution. I had to make restitution *after I got saved*. In fact, I had *to be willing to make it before I could get saved*. Now while I believe in restitution, yet I am convinced that it does not necessarily have to come *before salvation*. I believe you have to be *willing* to make it, IF YOU KNOW ABOUT IT. However, sometimes workers at the altar make restitution a condition of being saved. They tell seekers that you have to make the restitution before you can

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

be saved. I don't believe that is true. I believe you have to be willing to make it, but you can *get saved and then make it*. In fact, I have known of many people, who, if they had waited until they got everything fixed up in order to get saved, would have had to wait for years. They got saved and then made the restitution.

Some years ago I sat in a camp meeting and listened to Dr. Paul Rees preach a sermon on restitution. It was a great message and I approved of it. But he took for his text that verse in Acts 19:18, "And many that BELIEVED came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds." While he was preaching, I could not help but think of the divine order of the text. THEY FIRST BELIEVED. Then as a result of that they came and confessed and shewed their deeds and burned their books. They did it because they had been saved by faith, and NOT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED. Many people will do a lot of things if they ever get saved, but they will NEVER GET SAVED UNTIL THEY BELIEVE. They will do it *because they are saved* and not in order to get saved.

Many times in camp meetings I have heard preachers speak in a sneering manner about people taking salvation by faith, or taking sanctification by faith. Now I know there is a lot of shallow, superficial teaching these days about just taking Christ as your Savior and Sanctifier. Much of it is nothing in the world but just a mental process, and no doubt many people do profess who DO NOT POSSESS Salvation. While this is no doubt true, yet we as holiness people do need to see that salvation is by faith and faith alone.

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

We must remember that if we ever get anything from God WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE IT BY FAITH. That is the ONLY way we can get it. Without faith it is impossible to please God. He that comes to God Must BELIEVE that He is, and that HE IS A REWARDER of them that diligently seek him. We are justified by faith. We are sanctified by faith. We live by faith. We are kept by the power of God THROUGH FAITH. This is the victory that overcometh the world, EVEN OUR FAITH. After the emotion is gone and the feelings have passed away, we are still saved by faith. Your emotions may be at a low ebb, but if you are all on the altar, you are still sanctified by faith. This is true not because you feel like shouting. It is true because God says it is true. He cannot lie. Stand on His Word and not on your feeling.

When I watch some workers dealing with seekers at the altar, or in other places, and listen to them give instructions, I can't help but think of the way Jesus and Paul dealt with seekers. Jesus healed a man one day, and then later He said to him, "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee." When that man was let down through the roof into His - presence, He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." When He found Zaccheus up a tree, He said, "Come down and I will go home with you for dinner." After they got home, Zaccheus saw himself and told the Lord he would make things right. But Jesus went home with him. Then as a result, Zaccheus was willing to do anything for Him.

Paul would go into the most wicked cities and preach Christ unto people and they would believe.

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

After they had been saved, then they began to set things right. In fact, when Paul and Silas were cast into prison and the jailer was convicted, he asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." I have often felt that if that had been some preachers whom I have heard, they would have said, "Brother, if you expect to get right with God, you are going to have to get down here and apologize to me. You will also have to get some water and wash my back and fix me up something to eat. Then if you will agree to get up in public at the revival and make a public confession of your low-down dirty ways, then perhaps the Lord will meet your needs. But remember, you have to fix things up before you will ever find God." O, how easy it is for us to draw up our little blueprints and lay out our little plans of what people have to do. Jesus made the way plain and simple so everyone could get in. After you get in, then you will see a lot of things to do. In fact, the Holy Spirit may be bringing things to your remembrance for months and even years after you get saved, or even sanctified.

It is possible that if the Holy Spirit had showed us everything that was going to be involved in our salvation, it would have frightened us so we would never have been willing to undertake the thing. I know in my own life, that after I was sanctified, things came up, which, if I had known they were in that package I was laying on the altar, I may never have had the courage to have said "Yes" to all the will of God. But I did make my consecration, and down

WHEN SAINTS DISAGREE

through the years, as different things have come out of the package, I have found it in my heart to say, "Yes, Lord, I meant that too. I did not know it was in there but I want Thy will done." In fact, after all these years I have not yet found out all that was in that bundle I laid on the altar. While I don't know what was in the bundle, yet I am not uneasy or afraid. He has given me grace for every emergency thus far, and I don't think He will fail me now. It has been His grace that has made it possible for me to walk this way, and I believe His grace will see me through. He giveth more grace and then some more grace. In fact, if it were not for His grace, I could not make it. I not only needed the blood for my salvation and sanctification, but I have needed it every moment since. Thank God, His blood keeps me clean.

Brother, whatever you do, don't sneer at salvation by grace through faith. If it were not for that, then we would all be sunk. We are not going to get through on our holiness. We have to have holiness to get through, but please remember that you been made a PARTAKER OF HIS HOLINESS. It is HIS and NOT YOURS. It is God's gracious GIFT to you. He gave it to you not because you were worthy of it; He gave it because of His great love for you. Don't ever boast of it. Give Him the glory. Let your testimony be the kind that will exalt the grace of God and not you.

HOW TO BE KEPT IN PERFECT PEACE

The text is found in the prophecy of Isaiah, the 26th chapter and the third verse. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee." Among all of the rich and precious promises to be found in God's Word, it would be harder to find a richer, more precious, suggestive promise than the one that we have selected for our text. In fact it would be hard to conceive of a greater boon or blessing that could come to a human heart than to be filled with perfect peace, and be kept moment by moment in perfect peace in this old, sin-cursed world in which we live. When you think of the chaotic condition of this world today, of the strife, the confusion, the fear and the uncertainty that is gripping the hearts and minds of people you can readily see that the great need of the human race is peace. Not only peace between nations, but peace between God and man. To think of having your heart filled with perfect peace and being kept moment by moment in perfect peace is something that is really worth striving for. In fact, if you should go out on the streets and begin to talk to the average person of the world about being filled

HOW TO BE KEPT

with perfect peace, and being kept in perfect peace, many of them would laugh in your face, or would shrug their shoulders and say, "Oh, preacher, that's a pipe dream. Nobody could hope to be kept in perfect peace in this awful, sin-cursed world of strife and confusion." Friends, we readily recognize that from a human standpoint it is absolutely impossible. You can't keep yourself, I can't keep myself, none of us can keep ourselves in perfect peace, but, friends, this isn't a human proposition. We are not the ones who are to do the keeping. God Almighty is the one who has promised that He will keep us in perfect peace if we will meet the condition. While it may be impossible from the human standpoint, it is gloriously possible from a divine standpoint. Certainly God Almighty has proved His ability to do just the very thing that He has promised to do in this text. All down through the centuries you can find instance after instance, illustration after illustration, where God has literally fulfilled this promise, and verified His word in keeping people in perfect peace. You think of Enoch, living back there in that antediluvian age, where sin and wickedness were rampant on every hand, and yet we see that man day after day, week after week, month after month, walking with God, and having this testimony that he pleased God. In fact, he walked so long and so far with the Lord that one day the Lord said, "Enoch, it's closer to my house than to yours, how about going home with me," and Enoch walked with God and he was not, for the Lord took him. And we think of Noah living back there in that same age, and the

IN PERFECT PEACE

Bible tells us that the very imagination of the man's heart was evil continually, and it even repented God that He had made man, and yet God testified to the fact that Noah was perfect in his generation. God saw him through, brought him through the flood, safe out on the other side. We think of Daniel, and the three Hebrew children being carried captive from their own beloved homeland; their own loved country had been overrun by an alien army. The crops had been destroyed, the villages had been ravaged and ruined. Even the holy city had been overrun by an alien army, and the holy temple had been invaded and the precious vessels had been carried down into Babylon. There they were down there in a heathen land, surrounded by idolaters, superstition, opposition and sin on every hand, and yet we see those three Hebrew children refusing to bow their knee to the golden image. Being cast into the fiery furnace, but while they were in the midst of the flame one like unto the Son of God walks with them, and they come out without the smell of fire on their garments. We see old Daniel being cast into the lion's den down there among those ravenous beasts. I've often pictured him going to sleep that night using an old mountain lion for a pillow, and sleeping like a baby in its mother's arms, while the king up there in the palace paces the floor and wrings his hands and can't sleep. He comes down the next morning and he says, "Oh, Daniel, hath thy God been able to deliver thee," and Daniel said, "Yes, Sir, everything is all right. I had a good night's rest. Feeling fine this morning. How do you feel?" We think of the great apostle Paul

HOW TO BE KEPT

being whipped and beaten, and stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked and all those things, and yet we hear that great man of God testify, "I've learned in whatsoever state I am in therewith to be content," and exhorting other people to rejoice evermore and pray without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. We see John Fox and John Bunyan and the holy martyrs being cast into prison and cast into the arena, to be torn by the wild beasts, burned at the stake, and yet they die with their faces shining and their lips ringing with the praise of God and testify to the fact that God Almighty had been able to keep them in spite of the vicissitudes and trials of life. Someone told me that Uncle Buddy Robinson one time went to New York City and after he had been shown over the great city and seen the sights of interest, the great palatial homes and fine buildings, Uncle Buddy went to his room and dropped down on his knees and said, "Father, I thank thee that I ain't seen a thing I want all day." Just perfectly satisfied. He had peace and contentment in his own heart.

I shall never forget an experience I had a few years ago. I was holding a revival meeting in the first Methodist church at Winchester, Kentucky. At that time Dr. Virgil Moore was pastor of the Epworth Methodist Church in Lexington. He was a good friend of mine, and he invited me over one day for lunch. As we sat at the dinner table, he said, "Church, you've been out here to Kentucky a number of times. You've run around to see the sights of interest. You've been down to Dix Dam and out to see the Palisades and out to see Man of War. You've looked at these

IN PERFECT PEACE

big fine bluegrass farms." But he said, "There is one sight here in Kentucky that you haven't seen yet. To me it is the most interesting sight in our State. I want to show it to you today before you go back." I said, "I'll certainly be glad to see this sight that you are speaking about." After lunch we put on our hats, walked down several blocks into a very poor section of the city of Lexington, in fact, it was almost a slum section. Down on a little lot was a small house. The lot was so narrow they had to build the house the long way of the lot, We walked up on the porch, and the door was slightly ajar. Dr. Moore just pushed the door open and said, "It's your preacher that has come to see you. I brought you some company this time." A voice from the second room said, "Come in Dr. Moore, I'm so glad you came today." We walked back there to the second room and there on a single iron bed lay a woman, her arms across her breast. She told me she had lain that way for five years unable to move a finger to even pull the sheet off her face if it happened to get up there. But friends, I don't think I ever saw a more radiant saint in my life. That woman lay there and talked about the goodness of God, what wonderful fellowship she had with Him, and how the blessings of God had been resting upon her soul. Her husband was a poor man and had to work as a day laborer. He'd get up in the morning at five o'clock, and wash and bathe her, and dress her, and feed her her breakfast, and prepare her for the day, and then eat his own breakfast, and pack his own lunch, and go off to work and leave her there alone all day. She lay there and rejoiced and

HOW TO BE KEPT

praised God. Not one whimper, not one word of complaint did she utter. You just felt like you were in the vestibule of heaven. Finally, she said, "Now, Brother Church, I want you to pray for me before you go." I said, "Sister, I'm not worthy to pray for you. I want you to pray for me." We got down there by that iron bed; and we had prayer together. As we walked back up the street Dr. Moore said, "Church, that woman is a member of my church. She's been a member for years. She hasn't been inside the church for years now, but she has a greater influence than any member I have." He said, "People all over this city and surrounding country know about her, and her affliction and her wonderful Christ-like spirit. When they get down in the dumps they come over here to that little cottage and sit by that bed, get a basket of sunshine to take back home with them to cheer them up for the dark, trying experiences of life." Friends, God is able. God is able to keep people in perfect peace if they will meet the conditions and do what God tells them to do.

Now there are two great truths that are suggested by this text, and I want to call them to your attention just as briefly as I can, by the help of the Holy Spirit. The first truth that is suggested by this text is this.

You must be brought into a state of perfect peace before you can be kept there. Now I think that is evident. You don't have to be a theologian. You don't have to know a thing about homiletics to see that you can't be kept in perfect peace until you are brought into a state of perfect peace. Now the sin-

IN PERFECT PEACE

ner, the man or woman of the world doesn't have peace. They have a guilty conscience. They have a sense of dread. They have strife and confusion. In fact, an unsanctified person doesn't have perfect peace. They have peace with God. But friends, the Bible teaches that you can not only be at peace with God, but you may have the peace of God filling your heart and flooding your soul. When a person repents of his sins, and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is accepted by faith in Christ, then he is at peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." But friends, you can not only be at peace with God, but you can have the peace of God filling your heart and flooding your soul. Now you may feel like saying, "Well, Brother Church, that's a distinction without a difference." I don't think so, and I think I can readily illustrate the difference to you. For instance, there was a time a few years ago when Germany and the United States were at war with each other. But there came a time when the people of Germany threw down their arms of rebellion, ran up the white flag of surrender. Since that time Germany and the United States have been at peace with each other. Now while Germany is at peace with the United States, Germany doesn't have the peace of the United States. They don't have the peace over there that we have here. They have division and strife and fear and live under constant dread. Friends, you may be at peace with God, but thank God you can have the peace of God flooding your heart and filling your soul. After I had been preaching a little while I

HOW TO BE KEPT

came to see that the Bible makes a distinction between *being in Christ* and having *Christ in you* in the person of the Holy Spirit. Now when any person repents of their sins and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is saved by faith in Christ, they've come out of the world and they are in Christ. They've been delivered out of darkness into light, and out from under the dominion of Satan into the kingdom of God. They are in Christ. But friends the Bible teaches that you can not only be in Christ, but you can have Christ in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Now you may feel like saying, "Now, Brother Church, that's a distinction without a difference." I don't think so, and I think I can easily illustrate it to you. I might go down here to the Ohio River and pitch a bottle out there in that river. Now that bottle is in the river. But I can take the stopper out of that bottle, and let the water of that river get inside the bottle, and then the bottle is not only in the river, but the river is in the bottle. You see there is your two-fold relationship. A blacksmith may take a piece of cold black iron and put it in the fire. Now that iron is in the fire. But that blacksmith can start pumping that bellows, and the first thing you know that fire will permeate that iron, and then the iron is not only in the fire, but the fire is in the iron. There is a two-fold relationship.

There is a two-fold relationship in the Christian life. You can not only be in Christ, but you can have Christ in you in the person of the Holy Spirit, living, infusing, and permeating you, and filling you until you can't tell where you end and He begins. That

IN PERFECT PEACE

is one of the secrets of the Christian religion. You know there is a Greek word that is translated in the King James Version into the English word *mystery*. It is a mystery to the world, but I think that possibly a better word could have been found for that Greek word that would have conveyed the idea a little better. That word literally means a *secret revealed to the initiated*. It is used quite often in the New Testament. You remember that one time Jesus was teaching the people by parable, and after the crowd had left His disciples came up and said to Him, "Why do you teach the people by parables?" He said, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but not to them." Paul uses that word for he says, "Behold I show you a *mystery*." In other words, I'm going to tell you a secret; something that the world doesn't know about. I'm going to whisper a secret to you. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye."

Some years ago I was holding a revival meeting in the first Methodist Church in Yanceyville, N. C., and they were inviting us into their homes for meals. We were going to different places day after day. One day we went into a fine home. A lovely lady when she was taking my hat, said to me, "Mr. Church, are you a Mason?" and I said, "No, I don't belong to the Masonic Order." She said, "Well, I am so sorry. I was in hopes that you were a Mason." She said, "You know, my husband is a Mason, and he goes down to the Masonic Hall and he stays late, and comes back and talks about what a wonderful

HOW TO BE KEPT

time he had down there at the Masonic Hall, but he won't tell me what they do down there." She said, "I've begged, I've teased, I coaxed, I persuaded, I've tried every way to get him to tell me what they do down at the Masonic Hall, but he won't tell me." She said, "In fact, sometimes he has a habit of talking in his sleep, and someone told me if I would catch him talking in his sleep, and put his hand in a pan of cold water he would tell me anything I wanted to know, and I've even tried that, and he still won't tell me what they do down at the Masonic Hall." She said, "I was in hopes that you were a Mason, so that you would tell me what they do down at the Masonic Hall." Well I said, "Sister I'm not a Mason, but if I were a Mason, I couldn't tell you what they do down at the Masonic Hall, for," I said, "those are secrets that are not revealed to anybody but Masons. You have to be initiated into the Masonic Order before you can know the secrets of Masonry." And you know friends, God has some secrets that He doesn't reveal to just everybody. You have to get initiated into His family before you can know some of the secrets. If you do get initiated, and get into the family, then one day the Holy Spirit will whisper to you and say, "Say, you can not only be in Christ, but you can have Christ in you, the hope of glory; in the person and power of the Holy Spirit."

Now that is the secret of perfect peace.

The two main things that keep people from being kept in perfect peace are these: First-that old carnal nature that is in you, that you inherited as a result of the fall of Adam. Now when you get saved,

IN PERFECT PEACE

all of your past sins are blotted out. You are forgiven of every sin that you have ever committed, and in the sight of God you are just as innocent as a baby in its mother's arms. But you still have that old carnal nature, that old root of bitterness, that something that is contrary and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Paul tells us about it in Galatians where he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would." Paul tells us about it in the 7th chapter of Romans, where he says, "The things that I would do, I do not, and the things I would not do, those are the very things I do." He said, "After the inward man I delight to do the will of God, but I find in me another law that is contrary. It is the law of sin and death. Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Every person who has ever started out to live the Christian life, didn't go very far in the Christian life until they discovered that something in their heart. Now I am well aware of the fact that there are a lot of good people, who contend that you can't get rid of that carnal nature as long as you live in this world. They teach and contend that you just have to wrestle with it, and worry along with it, and do the best you can. Well, friends, if they are right in their teaching, then I want to say emphatically to you that God has promised something in this text He can't do. For God can't keep any person in perfect peace when they are having a civil war going on in their own breast. Now either

HOW TO BE KEPT

God can and God will burn out that old root of bitterness, crucify that old carnal nature; either God can and God will do it, or He has promised something in this text that He can't do. Now I don't know how you are, but I choose to believe that John knew what he was talking about when he said, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanses us from all sin,*" and I believe that Paul knew what he was talking about, when he said, "Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound." I believe that he was giving a testimony to the glory of God when he said, "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus *hath, hath, bath made me free from the law of sin and death,* for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,* who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." I believe he knew what he was talking about when he said, "But ye *are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,* if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you, and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness, and if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, Brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as

IN PERFECT PEACE

are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and, if heirs, then joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." I believe that the blood can go deeper than the stain of sin has ever gone. I believe that the minimum of the atonement more than covers the maximum of the fall. I believe that He can not only save from the guttermost, but unto the *uttermost*, all that come to God by faith in Him. I believe that the old carnal nature can be eradicated, and in its place we can be filled with perfect love, and joy that's unspeakable and peace that passeth all understanding. *But you'll never have perfect peace until you get that old carnal nature out of you.*

The second thing that keeps people from having perfect peace is an unwillingness to say, "Yes," to all of the will of God, an unwillingness to make a complete surrender of themselves to God. Now friends, as long as there is anything in your life that is unsundered, that isn't given up, as long as there is anything in your life you are not willing to say, "Yes," to God's will about, that thing will be like a cinder in your eye, or like a thorn in your flesh. It will gouge and irritate, and you'll never know perfect peace until you have made a complete surrender of your whole will to the will of God. You think of Jesus when He lived here on this earth. He was sensitive to sin. He was sensitive to discord. He was

HOW TO BE KEPT

sensitive to suffering, and pain, and yet He walked through this old sin-cursed world tranquil and poised. You never find Him off base. You'll never find Him upset. He was always the Master of the situation. Always poised and peaceful. Even when He stood in Pilate's judgment hall, and the Jews were yelling and screaming, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him," and Pilate standing there wringing his hands, saying, "Man, say something." Yet Jesus stands there poised and confident. How could He do it? Well, I'll tell you how. He said, "I do always the will of My Father. Not My will but thine be done." Even when the crowds were forsaking Him, and turning away from Him in disgust, we are told that He rejoiced in Spirit. You wonder how in the world He could do it. Well, the next verse tells us how He could do it. He said, "It seemeth good unto thee to hide these things from the wise and the prudent, and reveal them unto babes and sucklings." Whatever is good to you just suits me. I don't want anything but your will. I don't want anything but your way. Brother, when you get to that place, you can go to the Annual Conference, and while the cabinet is in session, and you don't know where you are going next year, you can go to your room and go to sleep in peace, because you don't want to go anywhere except where God wants you to go. You don't want any appointment except the one God wants you to have, and you don't want anything but God's will done in your life. *But you won't have perfect peace until you make a comcomplete consecration and yet the old carnal nature burned out of you.*

IN PERFECT PEACE

THE WAY TO BE KEPT

Now the second truth set forth in this text is this; It says, "Thou wilt *keep-that* is K-E-E-P, him in perfect peace." Not just bless Him during the Camp Meeting, on the Mount of Blessings. But after you get home, and the tide's gone out, and the shout's died down, and the evangelists have gone to other fields of labor, and maybe your neighbors are feeding you on cold shoulder and hot tongue, and husband's out of work, and the baby is sick, and you don't know where you're going to get the money to pay next week's rent. He can keep you in perfect peace in spite of all the vicissitudes and trials and the tests that may come your way. You ladies no doubt, have had this experience. You canned some vegetables, sealed them up in a can, screwed the top on tight, took it off to some dark, cool place, set it up on a shelf. Then maybe in about two weeks you went into that room to get something, and you heard something go s-s-s-s-t, sssst. Well now, those vegetables are not keeping. Something has happened. They're not keeping. When you see saved and sanctified people spew and stew and fume and fret, they are not being kept in perfect peace. Now I firmly believe that there have been many people who have been truly sanctified. They've made their complete consecration. They've received the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost, and had the old carnal nature burned out of them, and they have been filled with perfect peace. But many of them haven't been kept in perfect peace. I do not mean to imply that they have backslidden;

HOW TO BE KEPT

I do not mean to imply that they have lost the blessing of sanctification, and that they need to go to the altar again. In fact, I am firmly convinced in my own mind that many of them ought not to go to the altar again. Now you may not agree with me, and if you don't I won't fall out with you about it, but it is my honest conviction we've had too much running to the altar in the holiness movement. I think we've had some preaching that wasn't conducive to making saints. It was conducive to making a reputation for the evangelist. I think that a lot of times people have been dug up when they ought to have been settled down. I believe that a lot of people have been caused to cast away their confidence, when they ought to have been encouraged to lay hold on Christ, and take a firmer grip, and grit their teeth, and set their face, and decide they are going to be true to God in spite of shouts, or feelings, or close preaching, or anything else. If you backslide, by all means go to the altar, but don't cast away your confidence over every little wind that blows, and over every person that comes along and crooks his finger at you and says you don't have the blessing. He may not know as much about it as you do, and the Lord does. You can keep running to the altar until you don't know who you are or what you've got, or where you're going. You can become so confused that you wouldn't know straight up if someone pointed it out to you. And then another thing, it is confusing to the world. The world stands off and looks on and sees people going to the altar again, and again, and says, "Well if they can't keep it, what is the use of me trying to get it?" We need to see,

IN PERFECT PEACE

that just as there are conditions that must be met in order to get the blessing, there are conditions that must be met in order to keep the blessing. If you don't meet the conditions that it takes to get the blessing, you won't get it, and if you don't meet the conditions that must be met in order to be kept in perfect peace, you won't be kept in perfect peace.

I'll be honest with you, the hardest lesson I've had to learn in my Christian life is right at this point. When I was a student in college, preparing for the ministry, I got the light on sanctification. I sought earnestly for five months. One morning about one o'clock in the morning, God, for Christ's sake, heard and answered my prayer, and poured His Spirit out into this unworthy heart of mine, cleansed it from inbred sin, and filled it with perfect peace. It was the most glorious epoch that has ever taken place in my life. I'll never get over it if I live ten million years. So far as I know I haven't backslidden. I haven't lost the blessing. Bless God, in spite of all my failures, in spite of all my unworthiness, in spite of my blunders and shortcomings, and mistakes, the blessed Holy Spirit has walked with me down through these years. He has stood by me in my dark, trying hours, and if I know my condition this morning, bless God, He abides, He abides! He's right in here now. I don't have to wonder where He is. I know that He abides within my heart. I do not mean to imply by that, that I've always been kept in perfect peace I haven't. There have been times when I didn't meet the conditions, and I got in a stew. It wasn't due to the fact that I had backslidden. It wasn't due to

HOW TO BE KEPT

the fact that I had taken anything off the altar, I hadn't. God bears me witness this morning. I challenge heaven to witness to the fact that I put it there and have kept it there, and the altar has sanctified the gift. Shout or no shout, blessing or no blessing, doubts and questions, in spite of everything. It wasn't due to the fact that I had backslidden; it was just due to the fact that I hadn't learned the secret of how to be kept. Now what are the conditions that must be met in order to be kept in perfect peace? Well, they are given in this text. They are plain as the nose on your face. If you meet them I'll guarantee you that you'll be kept in perfect peace. If you don't meet them, I'll guarantee you, you won't be kept in perfect peace. Now what are they? The first one is, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee.*" The first thing you've got to do, if you are going to be kept in perfect peace, is to get your mind *stayed on God*. That word *stayed* means *fixed*; it means *set*. It is kind of like a dead man. As long as a man is alive, his eyes can roll and he can look at this, and at that, and the other. But when he dies, his eyes become set; he quits looking around. It doesn't make any difference what happens. The house where he is lying a corpse may catch on fire, but he doesn't look around. The floor in the room where he is lying a corpse may cave in, and the casket may fall down into the basement, but he doesn't look around. One of the pallbearers may drop dead between the house and the hearse; he doesn't look around. The preacher may faint in the pulpit while he is preaching the funeral sermon,

N PERFECT PEACE

but he doesn't look around. His wife may have a heart attack, and have to be rushed off to the hospital, but he doesn't look around-his eyes are set. Isaiah says if you'll get your eyes set on God and look at God, and don't look at your neighbors, and don't look at your kinsfolk, and don't look at your feelings, and don't look at the holiness preacher, and don't look at the backsliders, and don't look at the hypocrites, and don't look at the weather, and don't look at the winds, and don't look at anything, but look at God! Keep your eyes on God, and you'll be kept in perfect peace. You get to looking around, and you won't be kept in perfect peace. You'll be kept in a perfect stew. You can get to looking at people, good people; you can get to looking at holiness people, and become confused, and bewildered and perplexed. Why I've seen enough out of professing holiness people since I got into the movement, that if it had not been for my faith in God, it would have made an infidel out of me. They've done things that I could not understand. They've done things that have bewildered and confused me, until some times I didn't know whether I was going or coming. Then I have lifted my eyes to God, and I said, "O God, Thou art holy; Thy Son is holy; He suffered without the gates that He might sanctify the people with His own Blood; He loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it with the washing of water by His Word. The Holy Spirit is holy; the angels are holy; and heaven is holy; and You commanded me to be holy; and it is Thy will for me to be sanctified; and Thou hast called me to it, and I believe in it whether

HOW TO BE KEPT

anybody believes it or not." I believe in the great, holy infinite God of heaven!

Jesus came walking on the water one night, and Peter said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You." Jesus said, "Come ahead." And Peter stepped out over the edge of that boat onto the water, and started walking like it was concrete 40 feet thick, and so far as he was concerned it might as well have been concrete, so long as he kept his eye on Jesus. But he didn't keep his eye on Jesus. He got to looking around like you and me. He got to looking at the winds and the waves, and then he started sinking, and said, "Save, Lord, or I perish." You'll have to keep your eye on God. Don't look at Brother Day, he may fail; don't look at Judge, he may fail; don't look at Roy Nicholson, he may go down; don't look at John Church, he may disappoint you. But God won't disappoint you. A thousand may fall at your right hand, and ten thousand may go down around you, but God Almighty will never fail you. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The storms and the pestilences may come, and the winds may blow, and the storms may break upon your soul, but keep your eye on the Pilot. Don't even feel of your feelings, your *trust is in God*. Your salvation rests in the finished work of Christ. You are under the Blood.

Now, what is the second condition? It says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, *because-because!- he trusteth in Thee.*" You've got to *trust God*; not trust yourself, not trust

IN PERFECT PEACE

your preacher, not trust your wife, not trust somebody else, not trust in your feelings, but trust God! Now there are three Hebrew words that are translated into the English word "trust," but those Hebrew words are far apart in their original meanings. One of them is the word "hiphil"- now that means to accept a thing as being true, or to give mental assent to. Now, some of you people are sitting out there and saying "That's the truth-that's the truth, that fellow is preaching the truth." We can read the Bible and say, "That's the truth." "That's the inspired word of God," but if you don't go any further than that it won't make any difference. There have been people hanging around holiness meetings for forty years, endorsing holiness preaching, and if a man doesn't give a certain sound on the trumpet, brother, they'll climb his frame and trim him up. They'll give a hundred dollars to see that the camp is open next year, but they haven't got the blessing. They have accepted it, mentally; they give assent to it, mentally; but they haven't accepted it with their heart. They haven't done anything about it.

The next word is the word "batah." Now that means to look to, or to rely upon, or to expect something from. Now, that is a much richer word than the word hiphil. That is the kind of faith you have to have to get saved. You can't save yourself. You can come to this altar and bawl like a dying calf in a snow storm, and beat your hands on this altar, and yell and scream until they could hear you down to the center of town, but brother if you don't trust God you won't get anywhere. You'll never get saved

HOW TO BE KEPT

until you trust God. Some of you never have got through because you wouldn't trust God. The workers stood over you and sang, "I can, I will, I do believe." And you kept your head ducked down and said, "I can't and I won't, and I don't believe." And you wonder why you didn't get through. Well, I can tell you-you wouldn't trust God. That's the kind of faith you have to have to get sanctified. You can't sanctify yourself. I hear people say, "Die, brother. Lord, help him to die out." Well, I say amen, but brother if he ever dies out he won't do the killing. The Holy Ghost is the one who has to do the killing. We've got people down in North Carolina who have been working on the old man for 60 years, and he's just as much alive as he ever was. You can't crucify the old man. All you've got to do is stretch him out on the altar and look up and say, "Holy Ghost, do that, that I can't do," and then trust Him to do it. That's what Abraham did. Abraham brought his offering and cut it up and laid it on the altar, and then he stepped back and waited for God to do His part. He didn't run off. He watched it, and he waited for the evidence. The vultures came swooping around and he beat them off and said, "Don't bother that. That's holy." "That's consecrated, lay off of that." And he waited, and waited, until the fire fell, and God bore witness that the offering was accepted. It is not your business to sanctify yourself-you can't do it. It's your business to lay all on the altar; and trust the Blood, and plead the Blood, and let the Holy Ghost do the work. All right, just stick around. It will be done, but you don't have to yell and scream,

IN PERFECT PEACE

nor lacerate your flesh, nor pull your hair nor froth at the mouth. If you have met conditions, just take a trustful, reliant attitude and look up to God and expect Him to do it. He has never failed anybody yet. He put Himself on oath that He would not fail.

Now that is the type of faith you have to live by. You know you live by faith, not by feeling. You live by faith. You are kept by the power of God through faith. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. You live spiritually by faith, moment by moment, day by day. You just have to trust God all the time.

And you can live physically by faith. You know, Paul said, "My God shall supply all your need." Not *needs*. We often quote it *needs*, but it isn't plural, *it is singular*. You have but *one need at a time*. When you're eating breakfast you don't need dinner. You may have a heart attack before dinner, or Jesus may come before dinner. You know, that is the trouble with most of us. We are not willing to trust God just for breakfast. We are worrying about what we are going to eat for supper. Some of you people wring and twist your hands, "What am I going to do when I get old?" Well you may not get old; Jesus may come. You may have a heart attack. "What am I going to do if I lose my health?" You may not lose your health. You may go to heaven before you have a chance to lose it. Jesus said, "Give us *this day* - not next week, not next month-give us *this day our daily bread*." He hasn't promised us cake and ice cream, or pie a la mode. He hasn't promised us everything *we want*, but he has promised to supply

HOW TO BE KEPT

our needs and give us our *daily bread*, and bless God, I know He does it. I've tried it and proved it. The first charge that I ever served was a little mountain circuit back in western North Carolina, about 40 or 50 miles west of Asheville, away back there in the Smoky Mountains. When I went there the people were mad. They were fightin' mad. It had been a big 8-point circuit, too big for one man, and they divided it and made two circuits out of it. The crowd down on the lower end of the circuit got the parsonage and the furniture, and my crowd didn't get anything, and they were mad about that. And then when conference came they didn't have enough preachers to go around, and so they left that charge to be supplied, and my crowd was mad about that. They thought it was a reflection on them to have to put up with a supply preacher. Then finally the District Superintendent came to college and got me to go up there, and act as a supply until they could get a better preacher. When I got off the train and they saw what they had, they just hit the ceiling. They just went up in smoke. The charge lay leader called a secret meeting of the Board of Stewards, and he said, "Now, fellows, I don't have anything against that little old preacher. He looks innocent enough. I don't think he can do much harm. I don't think he could do much damage anywhere, but we are not going to be treated in any such manner as this. If you fellows will agree with me, and stand by me, we'll starve him out. We won't pay him anything, and he'll have to quit, and we'll let the Bishop and the cabinet know they can't treat us like this." And

IN PERFECT PEACE

they agreed they would starve us out. They didn't have any parsonage. They had a little two-room house, which wasn't even weather boarded. Built out of rough pine lumber, all right from the saw mill, planked up and down like that, and strips nailed over the cracks. It had been built for a one-room house, but after they got it built they decided it was big enough for two. They just nailed some plank up and down the center and made two rooms out of it. They didn't have a stick of furniture. Our furniture was there, but it was in the depot. They knew it was there, but they were mad, and they didn't care whether we had any furniture or not. The first night we were there we slept on the floor. Used a quilt to sleep on and one to cover with. We cooked our first meals in the fireplace in a frying pan. Finally when I got my furniture out there and unpacked, we didn't have any wood. They didn't care-they were glad of it. I borrowed a team and an axe and went into the woods and cut down green trees. I hauled them in and sawed them up into wood and Mrs. Church tried to cook with that old green wood. It would spew and stew and sap would run out on the floor and stand in a puddle. She would cry and worry trying to bake bread. You can't bake bread with old green wood. You can dry it out, but you can't bake it. Finally one morning she looked up at me and said, "Honey, this is the last bite of meat. we have in the house. I don't know what in the world we are going to do." Well, I said, "Honey, the Lord has called us into this work and He will provide." But, I'll be honest with you, my faith wasn't very high

HOW TO BE KEPT

that morning. I was like the little boy whistling through the graveyard to keep up his courage. I went out and did some pastoral work that morning, and came in early in the afternoon, went to the barn, took the saddle off my horse, put the plow gears on him, hitched him to a sled and drove down by the house and called to my wife and said, "Honey, I'm going over to Will Farmer's to get that bushel of corn, that she promised me to feed my horse on. I'll be back in a little bit." I went over there and she wasn't at home. She was across the ridge at her mother's. The corn was over there anyway. I went out and told her what I had come for. She said, "Brother Church, get more than a bushel, get all your horse can pull on that sled." I loaded up my sled with corn, and started around the corner of the house, and thanked her for it. Just as I was driving off, her mother came to the door and said, "Brother Church, we are Baptist people, we don't belong to your church, but we go to hear you preach, and enjoy hearing you. Last night after we went to bed husband and I agreed that if it wouldn't make you mad we'd give you a piece of meat." Well, I said, "That certainly would be mighty nice of you, Sister Nelson." She took me out to the smoke house and unlocked the door. There was the smoke house hanging full of hickory cured meat. Just make your mouth water to smell it. She said, "Just help yourself. Cut down any piece you want." I started to cut down a middling, and she said, "Oh, don't take that middling; it's no good except to boil beans with. Here, take this ham." And she picked out a ham that would have

IN PERFECT PEACE

weighed at least 30 pounds. I thanked her for it, put it on the sled, and started home. I passed a little road where I had been going up to get some milk and butter from a family by the name of Moores. I thought I would get my milk and butter while over there and save a trip coming back. While I was standing in the door after I had got my milk and butter, Mrs. Moore said, "Brother Church, we killed two hogs here a while back, and our neighbor, Mr. Matthews, over across the way, didn't have any fresh meat and we sent them some. They killed day before yesterday and sent a big chunk of fresh meat over here to us. We don't need it, and it isn't large enough to salt down, so if it won't make you mad I believe I'll just give it to you." Well, I said, "I would appreciate it very much, Sister Moore." She wrapped it in brown paper, and I took it down and put it on the sled and started home. I passed the home of the richest man on my circuit, a fellow by the name of Charlie Byrd. He lived in a big two-story house, had a fine herd of registered Jersey cattle. He lived off the cream of the country. As I drove by, he came running out and said, "Brother Church, I was just getting ready to go up to your house. It will save me a trip. We killed hogs day before yesterday, and my wife wants to send your wife some fresh meat. If you don't mind I'll let you take it and save me hitching up and having to unhitch when I come back." And he came out with a big round-bottom basket, just full of backbones, and spareribs, and tenderloins, and liver mush, and souse meat, with a nice white napkin over the top. I thanked him for it, slapped

HOW TO BE KEPT

the horse with the line and said, "Giddup." I drove up in the front yard and I said, "Honey, come out here, right quick. Hurry. Come quick." And when she came to the door I said, "You ordered meat this morning, and the Lord's filling orders now the same day He gets them. Here's meat. Here's cured meat, here's chunk meat, here's backbones, here's spareribs, here's all kinds of meat." He won't let you down. He won't fail you.

But Isaiah uses a bigger word than that. He uses the word "Batah" which means to *take refuge in*, or to *settle down in*. Literally he says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because *He settled down* in Thee." You know, you just quit moving around and jumping about from pillar to post and running here and yonder. You just move into God and unpack and settle down. Like a lot of people have done since the war. A lot of people during the war lived in trailers and attics and basements, and with their in-laws, all packed up. They didn't have elbow room, had to go outdoors to turn around and get a fresh breath of air. But since the war is over they've bought them a piece of ground, and built them a house, sowed the grass, and set out the shrubbery. They've *moved in* and *unpacked*; hung the pictures on the walls, and laid the rugs on the floor. They've looked at each other and said, "This is home. I'm not going to move any more. When ever I leave here they are going to carry me out feet first in a pine box, or a metal casket." And Isaiah says if you'll just quit jumping around like a flea, and will just move into God, and

IN PERFECT PEACE

unpack, and settle down, and put out the roots of your faith, and say, "He is my dwelling place. Regardless of what happens I'll dwell in Him."

If you will do that, then you may know what the poet was talking about when he wrote

I yielded myself to His tender embrace,
And faith taking hold of His word,
My fetters fell off, and I anchored my soul.
The haven of rest is my Lord.
I have anchored my soul in that haven of rest,
I'll sail the wide seas no more.
The tempest may sweep o'er the wide stormy deep,
In Jesus I am safe evermore.

Some years ago I read of a very wealthy man in New York, who had made his millions on the stock exchange. He went out on Long Island and had him a fine home built. When this great mansion was finished, and he was ready to move into it, he took two great artists out and showed them over his fine home. Finally he came to a large comfortable room. He said to them, "This is my personal den. I had it built sound proof and comfortable so I could come here from the noise and confusion of life, and find rest and quiet. Now I want each of you men to paint me a picture for this room. It is to be hung over the fireplace there. I want it to be suggestive of rest and peace." They went away and after some months had slipped by they notified him that they had finished the pictures and were ready to show them in the place he wanted to use them. On the day appointed they all went out to the home. One

HOW TO BE KEPT

of them unrolled his canvas. On it he had painted the picture of a beautiful flower garden. The flowers were blooming on every hand. Birds were singing in the branches of the trees, and a placid stream was wending its way down through the flower garden. He had given the title of, "The Garden of Peace," to his picture. The man looked at it and said, "That is very lovely and suggestive, but let us see the other one before I make my choice."

When the other artist unrolled his canvas, and hung it in place, strange to say he had painted a picture of a wild raging sea. The waves were beating on the boulders along the coast, that were covered with white crests that spoke of terror. As the waves broke on the shore line they revealed the huge boulders along the coast, that were covered with the back wash of the waves. In the midst of those great rocks was the broken hull of a mighty ship, that had been dashed to pieces by the storm. There was a great gash in the ship, and the wreckage told of the mighty pounding it had passed through. Just out from the shore a short distance was a mighty rock, that rose up into the air for nearly a hundred feet. At its foot the waves were breaking and falling back. Up near the top of this great rock was a large cleft in the rock. In this cleft was a nest with a bird on the nest, and its eyes were closed in sleep. The artist had given the title of "Rest in the Midst of the Storm," to his picture.

As the man looked at it and caught its significance, he said, "That is what I want. I want rest in the midst of the storm. I do not live in a garden of

IN PERFECT PEACE

Eden. I live in a world of turmoil and strife. I want something that can give me rest in the midst of the storm of life." Well, thank God, the inspired prophet tells us where we can find that rest. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

Amen!

