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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
Sunday morning, 30th June 1968

" Because I will publish the name of the Lord;
ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the
Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are
judgement; a God of truth and without iniquity,
just and right is He".

Deuteronomy 32 v.3-4.

This is Moses song setting forth God's mercy and vengeance. It commences with majesty: "Give ear O ye heavens and I will speak and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth". He calls heaven and earth to witness His majesty and to hear the declaration of the wonders that He has wrought. "Give ear, O ye heavens," and indeed the heavens declare the glory of God. I did for about a moment this morning feel a little of this majesty in the beautiful morning and the shining of the sun and all the works of God and His benefits, it seemed to come into this first verse. "Give ear, O ye heavens and I will speak, hear O earth, the words of my mouth", and it may well be according to the angels in heaven as to men upon earth, "my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the showers upon the grass".

This doctrine is the Gospel, the dropping down of the dew and the small rain is the opening of the heavens in answer to that prayer in Isaiah, and the prayer in many a poor sinner's heart, "Drop down ye heavens from above, let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open", and some of you who are longing and thirsting for the living God in a dry and thirsty land, O how that prayer suits your case.

"Drop down ye heavens". Everything living must come down from heaven, "And let the skies pour down righteousness". That is, all the means of grace that God has appointed which convey by the Spirit the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open". A poor sinner's heart opens to receive this doctrine, to hear this speech. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord". This word because is connected with the second verse. "My doctrine shall drop down as the rain and my speech shall distil as the dew, because I will publish the name of the Lord." Publishing the name of the Lord is a declaration of the Gospel. For the name of the Lord is all that is to be known in God in Christ by the Holy Ghost. It is all His name. As a reputable manufacturer will stamp his name upon all his products, upon all his goods, and that it should be known that it is his, his name appears on his goods, it is reliable, you can depend upon it. You might hear some people say, well, be sure you see that name on it and don't be put off with any substitute. So the name of the Lord is stamped upon all His works.

You will see His name stamped upon all His works in creation, "All Thy works praise Thee", and you will see His name stamped, some of you know it, in all His sovereign work of salvation and you will want to see the stamp of His name upon all your religion. You will want His name stamped upon your faith, stamped upon your hope, that it may be a good hope through grace. O the name of Jesus! What He is! It contains the whole of the Gospel. He is the Lord our righteousness, that is His name. He is called the Holy One of Israel, and Israel's holiness is in Him, that is His name. So that this doctrine, or this teaching, this preaching of the Gospel descends from heaven.. It drops as the rain, it is sovereign. We cannot command the rain, we cannot restrain it. We cannot command the rising of the sun. To my mind there is a beauty - and it is an encouragement

to faith to see the name, the glory of God stamped upon every one of His works. The dew drops from heaven. Sometimes you will feel something drop. May express it like that, in the midst of some deep trial, may drop from heaven, a word into your soul, or there may be dew and dew usually descends in the night time. You see it in its sparkle on the blades of grass in the morning and O how penetrating that is, and this is in the Gospel, it comes, all comes from heaven and the beauty of it is in its source, and that is the Object of faith, and it has the stamp of the name of the Lord Jesus in Whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. All merits in Him. All power, all wisdom, all grace.

"My speech shall distil as the dew", and His speech also is in the preaching of the Gospel. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord". O -

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,
In a believer's ear".

It is powerful, it is effectual, it is like dew, it comes sovereignly,

"It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear".

"Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God". This ascription of greatness to God in the first place intends His infinite Being. Some of you may have felt, I believe on one occasion I felt a trembling sense of the infinite Being of Jehovah. In Himself with respect to sinners He is a consuming fire. Dwells in a light no man can approach unto. Incomprehensible He is, and to be given faith to believe that He is and to view Him in the Person of His incarnate Son is the greatest comfort and consolation that a poor trembling sinner can have because in Christ all those divine perfections meet, and those very perfections that are a consuming fire out of Christ, yet as they meet in Him they provide a Refuge for sinners. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God".

His Being is underived. He is self sufficient. He alone needs nothing. There was no necessity in this great God to act in creation at all, He needed nothing. It is a great thing to have a right conception of this glorious God, and what a mystery and a mercy that the chief of sinners, taught of the Spirit, given to see the glory and greatness and power of God in a Redeemer, in a Substitute, in a Mediator, why, how suitable it is, it is then that you will not wish Him less than He is, or different from what He is. Have you ever felt a little of that drawing? you, a poor vile worm in the dust, and yet worms approach this great Majesty of heaven through the Person of His dear Son. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God".

There are two kinds of people in this song, the Lord's people and His enemies, and of those, His enemies, it is said, their rock is not like our Rock, and the Foundation of this Rock is the Being of God. He is immutable, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. Those terms, if they are brought into the heart by the Spirit to a poor weak trembling sinner will be a strength. It is a great thing to behold God in Christ, and it is in His name. His name is great. His name is great because of what He is. O my friends, may this be impressed upon us with respect to our own cases, our own profession, our own religion, to see that the stamp of Christ's name is upon all that we profess, all that we experience, all of our religion, and to refuse every imitation. I think we just referred to that a little time since in the Philippians, Paul, had such a love for that Church was persuaded, he said: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you", stamps His name on it, "Will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ". We emphasised the importance of it being the VERY THING, the very faith

of God's elect, the good hope through grace, the love of God shed abroad in the heart, the fear of God which is an unctuous light to all that is right. Has the name of Christ in it and in it has the greatness, the power, the majesty of Jehovah. "Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock".

This refers to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the Rock. He is the Foundation. He is the Foundation which is laid in Zion, the Rock upon which the Church is built. Peter confessed Him, he said, that He was the Son of the Living God, "Blessed art Thou, Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, and upon this Rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". That is true of everyone of His people, their position is impregnable though apparently among the weakest men upon the earth.. They stand secure upon this Rock of Ages. He is the Rock. He would not have been a Rock had He not become man. God could not be a Rock. An absolute God could be nothing to a sinner but a consuming fire. It does show to us the solemnity and the completeness of man's ruin in the fall. When man was created he was not built upon this Rock at all, otherwise he would never have fallen. He was created perfect, perfectly capable of obeying the law in which he was created, perfectly capable, otherwise there would have been an injustice in God, but that human innocence was no security to man. His created righteousness was losable and he lost it. There was no Rock when man was created. But there was a provision in the eternal council and purpose of God against the fall, and there was this Rock provided, and nothing could be a Rock to sustain the weight of the whole Church to be found among men. O it does show the distinction, the disparity between the glorious God and man.

I do not wonder that the Psalmist exclaims, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" So mindful of him as to provide this Rock, this Defence, and there is this, there was no necessity in God to provide a Substitute, to send a Saviour. It is a point that I feel we need to remember for there is a beauty in it. Nothing was a necessity to God at all. He was under no necessity to save anybody. Man fell by his own sin, and if God had left the whole human race in that state of ruin He would have been just. But the great point here is this, where would have been the glory of God in a destroyed human race? no animals or beasts can redound to His glory, they are made for the service of man, it makes human nature to be exceedingly solemn. We have not time nor ability to consider it, but that question, "What is man?" To consider him before he fell, to consider him since he fell and ruined himself, but if the whole of the human race ended in a mass destruction what glory would redound to God in His creation? and therefore in the Covenant of Grace, He decreed, He elected to save a people and that people is in this chapter: "For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance, He found him in a desert land". The world as it is today, full of death, corruption, chaos, murders, was not how it was created. The works of the Lord are perfect. In the first creation there was nothing that would harm. There were no stings to bees, no wild beasts to tear one another to pieces, there were no thorns on the roses, no weeds in the garden. We cannot imagine the blessed estate of man before he fell, but all creation groans through sin, and yet the Lord comes into the midst of such chaos, such sin and brings life and light, and immortality to light through the Gospel, and in this work of salvation His glory is displayed more than anywhere else.

A greater glory is displayed in redemption than there was in the first creation, and He is the Lord Jesus, blessed be His name, He is the Rock, the Foundation of it all, and this Rock must be omnipotent, it must be immutable, it must be God Himself. Rock. The very word stands immovable. O what a relief it is to consider this as we look at everything else around us, everything falling to pieces, all in a state of confusion, change and decay stamped upon everything. That is the name stamped upon everything here, change and decay. Solomon

when he had surveyed the whole universe, had this stamped upon it, vanity and vexation of spirit. Then turn from all those sinking things and that sinking sand to this eternal Rock. O blessed people that are built upon it ! the Church of God, and it is a Rock because He is God. If God could have saved the Church by any other means than delivering up His dear Son into the wicked hands of men to suffer reproach and ignominy and sufferings and death, He would have used that means, but there was none, there was none, and you will feel it, you will feel it in your experience. The very truth will enter into your heart as you view yourself, prostrate, self ruined in the fall, there is none, no other ransom, no other deliverer but the Lord Jesus Himself It will shut you up unto Him

He is the Rock, so He is eternal. When He became Man He did not cease to be God and therefore, everything in the publishing of this name and the declaration of His greatness has eternity in it. When you consider that these eternal things and this eternal truth and Gospel is a provision for dying men, it is an amazing mystery. But the whole thing is, your own experience, your own case. If what we are saying is true and this enters into your heart, it is a kingdom, it is a heavenly omnipotent power that reigns in your soul. It makes a child of God a wonder. I do not mean a religious person, but a child of God who belongs to Him,

"Chosen of God e'er time began"
is a wonder.

O I have asked the Lord if He would make me one. Is this name in your heart ? Is this name, this greatness in your heart ? Is this kingdom, this divine and heavenly power in your heart ? Is this saving grace in your heart ? He is the Rock. Immutable because He is omnipotent. An eternal Rock because He is eternal. Immutable Rock because He can never change, and all that is in the Gospel and is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Ghost.

He is the Rock. The Rock of Ages, and He was laid. This Rock, this Foundation was laid by the Father. It was laid when He was laid in the manger and He has in Himself all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All the divine perfections are in the human nature of the Lord Jesus. O what an Object of prayer ! It is upon this ground that Paul encourages the Hebrews: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace". The ground of boldness is in this Rock. How secure His people are. Ah, my friends, to have faith in Him, to be able to come to Him just as you are. How foolish it is to attempt to find something in yourself, to come to this Rock with. If we come attempting to be something a little better, dress ourselves up to make ourselves a little more presentable, to wait until we find, or think ourselves to be a little more spiritual, the Lord will despise it. But if we come in destitution He will receive us. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute". Destitution and a full Christ suit each other. A poor sinner, as it were, derelict, with no standing, exposed, coming to this Rock and the Lord bringing Him up out of the miry clay and setting his feet, the feet of His faith upon Christ the Rock, it will establish His goings, establish his path.

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect. When we speak of a work that men do as perfect, it is perfect because it is well done, well, that is true of the work of the Lord but it is not the first thing. His work is perfect because of Him Who did it. He is perfect, and therefore all His work is a work of perfection. So the work of salvation was perfect. Perfect in His Person. Perfect in His humanity. He was therefore a perfect Substitute, there was no flaw and it is amazing grace that this glorious Lord was appointed a Substitute for sinners. He, this Rock, the Substitute in Christ so that His-work the beauty and merit of His Person and of His glorious work is put to the account of His dear people. What He did, they did in Him. The merit of His sufferings is put to their account. The Substitution of the Lord Jesus Christ was in everything that He became and everything that He did. O this is a great salvation, and this is the Foundation, the Rock upon which it

stands. Born in sin and shapen in iniquity we were. He was born, born of a virgin, sinless, impeccable, holy, and that blessed birth belongs to His people, an exchange for how they were born. O what a Rock this is ! It will be something more than a theory if ever we have been brought by the Holy Ghost to realise what we are in the ruins of the fall. O amazing this that those ruins could ever be repaired.

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect", and it is a Rock. Salvation is a Rock. The work of the Lord Jesus, first that He wrought out for sinners and the same perfect work is wrought in them by the Holy Ghost, and it is this perfect work that we should, if enabled, speak of. But it is perfection derived from its person, and so is all your religion. O to have union with Him. Look then at His work of redemption. It was perfect. The precious blood of Jesus Christ was invaluable blood. It was the blood of God. It does not intend only that fluid which flowed from His sacred side, but the whole of His Person, His life, His holiness, His righteousness, His glory, everything was in His precious blood, and the blood of Christ speaks peace. The infalibility of the blood of Christ is greater than the indelibility of the stains of sin. Have you ever felt, I believe I felt it in the night, last night. Look at your black black life, O the stains, a sin stained life. Have you not sometimes felt that nothing would ever take the stain out ? But O His perfect atonement ! "Come now, let us reason together saith the Lord, though your sins be as crimson they shall be as wool, though they be red like scarlet they shall be as white as snow". David believed it. O the stain that was upon his conscience. It looked as though nothing would ever take that stain out. "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. He was upon the Rock, the perfect Rock of redemption, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect". His work was suffering. He was called to suffering. The law demanded suffering and the law demanded perfection. We have said sometimes and I feel it is a right thing to say, that the law scrutinised the Lord Jesus. The holy light of the law., and if the birth of Christ was anything less than immaculate, absolutely sinless, the law would have rejected it. If in His incarnation He was no less than God's eternal and only begotten Son, the law would have rejected it, and in His sufferings, He was made perfect through sufferings, and the law scrutinised the sufferings to see whether they were perfect. If He had suffered anything less than His people deserved to suffer in hell it would have been rejected. But it was perfect.

O my friends, to have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. His sufferings were so perfect that He suffered all that every one of His people deserved to suffer in hell. "He is the Rock; His work is perfect". But we must leave it.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim
and not edited for publication).