

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, on the
Wednesday evening, March 2nd, 1960

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Text: Hosea ii. 21-23.

This chapter, and a good deal in these Minor Prophets, have doubtless a literal reference to the Jews and the Gentiles, and it would have such a reference where it says, "And I will say to them which are not My people, Thou art My people, and they shall say, Thou art my God". The Apostle reminds these Gentiles of this where, writing to the Ephesians, he says: "Wherefore remember, that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us". But I do not purpose to pursue that literal line/- I have not the ability to do it but rather would as enabled speak of these most gracious promises as suitable to poor, needy, feelingly destitute, hungry and thirsty sinners.

"and it shall come to pass in that day." There will be a literal day when there will be the fulness both of the Jews and the Gentiles, which just means that there will be a calling both of Jew and Gentile; for "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is All and in all". That is the most important thing in these prophecies. Doubtless the Lord's purposes concerning His national people are ripening fast, and His promises and national covenant will be fulfilled to the very letter, to demonstrate among other things His immutability in maintaining His people through the ages, and bringing them at last even to their own nation, their own country.

But what concerns us, my friends, is our personal salvation. "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth." I would speak properly, and therefore I read that chapter in Isaiah (55th), and we shall be safe if we keep to the Word of God and our own experience: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth". And therefore the church a little later in Isaiah prays, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down!" And here is a promise that the Lord Jehovah will hear the heavens.

Well, let us consider in our own experience what there can be in the heavens concerning us for the Lord to hear. Is it not in the first place, the exalted Redeemer, who has entered into heaven itself, there to appear before God for His dear people, an Intercessor, an Advocate there? That is the first thing that Jehovah hears: "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens". You may have felt a little, when everything else has appeared to you just what it is, dead and dark, and yet had passing across your mind what good Richard Dore had: "There is a Man in heaven that loves me, and whom I love"; or with Asaph, you may look up to heaven, away from the earth, and confess: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" But then God hears His exalted Son. He that descended and led captivity captive, ascended on high, ascended there differently from ~~how~~ how He was there before, and yet He did not change.

Oh the mystery of godliness! God the eternal Son is incapable of in any way changing. But He is in heaven now with a human body: "A Man there is, a real Man". Oh is it more to us than a mere theory? Is there any connection between that blessed Man and your soul, and your needs? "I will hear the heavens, saith the Lord." "A Man there is, a real Man, With wounds still gaping wide." And that human heart He still retains, though throned in highest bliss. And just before He suffered, before His love to His dear people brought Him into Gethsemane and to the cross, He prayed unto His Father for His people, and He makes intercession still. "His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." He has satisfied divine justice. "With cries and tears He offered up, His humble suit below; But with authority He asks, Enthroned in glory now." And the Lord hears Him: "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens". Haven't some of you, as you have been gathered, and sometimes drawn to the sanctuary, away from all the jostling tumult, conflict, anxieties of this world, seemed to breathe a different atmosphere, and to realize in a measure what Jacob felt to fill his soul: "How dreadful is this place; this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven"? And so the Lord does hear the heavens in that sense. Ministers of the Gospel, in the Revelation, are spoken of as angels: "I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto men upon the earth". And that sets forth an exercised minister in his meditations in the truth, having before him his people, flying as it were in the midst of the Gospel in his meditations, in the heavens after it, seeking for the Lord's blessing upon the people; and the Lord hears - hears the heaven. "I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth."

We read of this in this connection as "the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whom it is dressed". So the earth is the people, their hearts, exactly the same as the earth into which the good seed fell, and it shows the connection between the earth and the heavens. How this is set out before us in nature, in creation, in the parable of the sower. But it is put here as though the earth speaks: "It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth". Now I wonder if those heavens to which we have referred, especially to that fountain, that inexhaustible fulness that there is in the Lord Jesus, that fulness that flows as streams from the river of God, whether it has heard your voice: "And they shall hear the parched earth". "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Perhaps in a very particular way you see the earth opening her mouth through the Book of Psalms. If you read through the Psalms, how it expresses the deep needs and desires of poor, weary, needy sinners! There are the heavens where Christ is, there is the heaven of the church, there is the Gospel in all its fulness, and there are poor sinners. We were reading just now, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price". So here is a promised contact, living communications from heaven to the earth, and for this reason, because of the victory of Christ, because He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men. Everything is in Him. Whatever we have we must receive from Him. He is the Fountain of Life. "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth." Well,

it would indeed be a mercy to hear the earth speak. The same thing really the Lord says: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". The beauty that I see in it, if I could but express it and feel His "notwithstanding" all things going on in the world, in the profane world, the terrible immorality and the dangers and evils that abound, together with spiritual wickedness in high places. Oh my friends, what a solemn thing it is for no less a dignitary than Dr. Matthews, the Dean of St. Paul's, to hope that he will be able to influence the doing away of the Thirty-Nine Articles, in order to eliminate from the Prayer Book what he calls that dangerous doctrine of predestination. He is prepared to remove the very foundation from the Church of England, and therefore from our beloved nation. But the Word of God has anticipated these antichrists. He is an antichrist, a dishonest man, and the Scriptures declare, "Nevertheless" - whatever the Dean of St. Paul's or any bishop should say - "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His". And nothing can alter these "shalls" and "wills", this exalted High Priest in heaven. He said concerning Himself to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Oh it is a comfort that nothing can alter God! I feel to be brought back, and would bring you back continually from all else to that one glorious Object of faith, the eternal Jehovah, and that it pleased Jehovah that in the Person of Immanuel should all blessings, all power, all life, all grace, and all righteousness dwell, and that God hears the heavens, and the heavens that He has prepared for His people here, and the heavens hear the earth, hear their cry, their cry for life, for mercy, for grace, for righteousness, for strength, for wisdom, for deliverance. "The heavens hear the earth." There is something very blessed about it. There have been occasions when I have felt a solemn sober sense of contact between the gathering of the Lord's people as we are gathered now, and the glorious Head in heaven. Everything in the church, the institution and constitution of the church, everything individually that we receive comes from Him. And what a mercy if we have any evidence of union with Him! We shall know it if we ever get contact with Him. Oh then may the Lord grant us clear evidences as a people that the Lord on our account hears the heavens, and the heavens hear the earth.

"And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil." So that it would seem that the corn, and the wine, and the oil speak. It is really the heavens hearing the earth and answering her needs according to the invitation. This is the corn, and the wine, and the oil hearing the earth: "Come ye to the waters; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" Now you look at this hearing of the earth, and the earth hearing the corn and the wine: "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live". Do you find any connection in these things? Do you find your earth begin to open sometimes with real parched hunger and thirst, and then again it gets it wider open by some sweet anticipation and attraction? The Lord hath heard the heavens, and the heavens have heard your desires, and

needs, hunger and thirst, so that the corn, and wine, and oil begin to speak, that is to say, the fulness of the Gospel in the application of it.

"Corn" - what is this to represent, but the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone". If the Lord Jesus had never condescended to become Man, He would have abode alone. There would have been no church with Him. The eternal and glorious Trinity needed nothing. They did not need the church. God can need nothing, but according to His sovereign uncaused love and will, He determined to have a church, He determined that His glory should be beheld by a creature created with a capacity to behold it. And yet that creature equally fell with mankind. Hence the necessity in the covenant of grace for redemption, for the condescension of God's eternal Son, for this corn of wheat. And what a corn it was! He possesses exclusively in Himself all the properties of life, and He brought forth in His resurrection the whole of the election of grace. But then that corn of wheat contained in it every blessing. Oh the spiritual blessings that are in Christ Jesus! Every grace, every favour, faith, hope, love, righteousness, infinite merit, unsearchable riches, were in this corn of wheat, and it speaks. "The earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil." And haven't you ever heard it, heard a voice in the Gospel, the riches of grace, the sweetness, the power of the truth in the Gospel? "The earth shall hear the corn and the wine."

We tried to speak a little about the wine: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that are of heavy heart". Mainly this wine sets forth the love of God in Christ, and the precious blood of Christ; and it speaks. His blood speaks better things than that of Abel. It speaks in heaven. There is One that hears, even God Himself hears the Intercessor and the Advocate to plead the cause of His dear people. And the heavens do hear the earth. It is a wonderful thing that an insignificant sinner with his mouth in the dust, in the corner of a room lying upon a bed, that the heaven can hear the earth, and hear it in such a way as to bring forth the banquet, spread the Gospel table, and the Gospel begins to speak and move in your soul. It is a voice different from any other voice, and it is the voice of the Lord Jesus in it all, whether it is the corn or the ~~oil~~ wine: "The earth shall hear the corn and the wine". The precious blood of Christ: "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission". Although we would speak reverently of that sacred blood which flowed from the wounded side of Immanuel, but it means more than that liquid. The life was in the blood, we read in Moses. Merit was in it, love was in it, mercy flowed through it. It speaks peace. Oh what a value David put upon this precious blood in the 51st Psalm! There are two things he could not leave alone, and really, my friends, I feel the same. There are two things I cannot leave alone, and that is my deep, deep sins, my corruptions; and there is another thing, and that is the precious blood of Christ - two things.

"The earth shall hear the corn and the wine." The wine represents also the love of God in Christ. Oh to have that love shed abroad in the heart! And where can you see love - I mean natural love? Not only and merely in those things that are given to you; but

you will see love in suffering more than you will see it anywhere. There are plenty of people might profess to love you, but oh if that love is put to the test! "Bear ye one another's burdens", but oh to bear one another's pains and sorrows! But the love of Christ is manifested in His sufferings. Have you ever heard this wine speak? "They shall hear the corn and the wine." Ever heard the wine of the love of Christ speak in Gethsemane, upon the cross? If the Holy Ghost should take you by the hand deep down in your heart, and lead you to the Lord Jesus as they brought Him forth. There was omnipotence; there was God the eternal Son, the Creator of the world - they brought Him forth. He allowed them to do it. It was ignominy and shame. What for? Love to you who belong to Him. He allowed them to smite His sacred head with a reed, and if the Holy Ghost should point to that sacred head smitten, and then point to you, that wine would speak, His love would speak. And they clothed Him with a purple robe in mockery, that you might be clothed with His righteousness, Pressed a crown of thorns into His sacred brow, that you might be crowned with righteousness, the crown of life. Love - it speaks. They could hear it. Have you ever heard it?

"Oh love divine, how sweet thou art!

When shall I find my willing heart

All taken up by thee?"

And go back to the beginning - in heaven there is the blessed cause, the source. All flows down ~~from Him~~ through Him. "And the earth shall hear the oil", and this is the Holy Ghost in His operations. It is the oil of joy, and it is the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is His anointing, and it speaks. "It teacheth of all things, and is no lie; it abideth." If once you have heard the Gospel speak, you will know its voice again - the Holy Spirit.

I do need that oil. Without the Holy Ghost there are no communications at all. It is He that quickens; it is His unctuous influences that teaches to pray and communicates life by His regenerating grace. It is He who inspired the Word of God; it is He alone who can interpret it. The oil - oh He dose speak in the conscience!

"And they shall hear Jezreel." Well, Jezreel is set for the people of God, both Jew and Gentile, and particularly the church of God. It means this, that the church is a divine institution, the gathering together as we were reading in Isaiah: "The Lord will gather together the outcasts of Israel". That the work of the Holy Ghost in conversion, regeneration, leading sinners about, creating an aching void in their hearts, bringing them out of the world, giving them to want for that the world can never afford them, and then bring them to Zion, so that all that has been heard from heaven shall hear Jezreel. "See the suffering church of God, Gathered from all quarters." Yes, and will hear Jezreel, saying this among other things; that they will go and ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Whereas before they have asked their way to the theatre, the football field, the picture palace, now the appointed time has rolled away, and the Holy Ghost has changed the heart, renewed the will, the purposes of God in the covenant of grace, and the church is gathered.

And so this continues, "And I will sow her unto Me in the earth". The Lord will sow these people. Take for instance for an example in the Acts of the Apostles, upon the persecution of Stephen, they were scattered over the face of the earth as far as Antioch. Instead of

dead seed, they were living seed. They took root, and churches were formed. And so it is to-day, and the providence of God unites with His purposes of grace, and He sows His people unto Himself in the earth, some at Brighton, some at Maidstone, Hastings, Birmingham, and wherever it might be. He sowed this precious seed throughout the land. It is very blessed, and you will know them. Yes, it is a wonderful thing to have evidence of the work of ~~grace~~ the Spirit in the soul and the life of Christ, by feeling an attraction to the same grace and life when you come into contact with another. Oh this blessed sowing by the providence and grace of God in placing His people here and there!

But I must leave it. "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Well, it is a feeble word upon a blessed subject, but may the Lord mercifully perform the text, even in this place and in our hearts.
