

Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden, at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,  
Sunday morning, 28th February 1965

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert  
from the tempest; as rivers of water-in a dry place, as the shadow of  
a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32. v.2

In Eden, before man fell, there were no tempests, no dry places, no weariness. O what a beautiful place that was; what a beautiful pair Adam and Eve – sinless, innocent – all the works of God perfect! Each day's work He pronounced to be good, and as one of our dear old pilgrims observed to me this week, the last day's work, he said, was **very good**. The whole was perfect and complete. There was nothing in creation that could harm. There were no thorns to the roses. There was nothing that could sting, no wasps, no bees that could sting. The whole creation groans now through sin. The earth is cursed by God through sin, "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth."

The Lord created man with everything to make him happy, but he lost that inheritance. O what a loss it was! One would think – and indeed, in a sense, there could be added nothing to the perfect happiness, the sinless, innocent condition of man, as coming out from the hand of the Creator – and yet, the mystery of godliness was such that, through the fall of man, there was displayed a greater glory than all the glory of creation. But at the same time, man fell into a terrible inheritance. O look at the condition of the world since sin, like a mighty defiling flood, entered into Adam and Eve, and to all their posterity!

In Eden there was no decay, no death, no sickness, no sorrow. Had man never fallen, he would have never died. He would have lived eternally. He would have known none of these tempests, and winds, and dry places, and weariness; and therefore, my friends, while we are in the flesh, we shall be subject to all these consequences of the fall. But in mercy God made another Man. Adam sold the human race, ruined the human race. All in Adam die. But the Lord, in His mercy, made another Man, because of the covenant of grace, because of the decree of election - Another Head. Adam was the federal head of the human race, and those who remain in him will die eternally. But Jesus Christ is the federal Head of the election of grace; so that all those in Adam die, and all those that are in Jesus Christ shall be made alive.

By this Man, the church speaks of Him, pleads Him in the 80th Psalm: "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." (v.17) That One who is strong, upon whom the Lord has "laid help upon one that is mighty." (Psalm 89:19)

So He made this Man, a real Man, with a real humanity. Nothing different from our humanity, except He was sinless, and sinless in His holy, sacred birth. And He is manifested, manifested in the Word of God, as He went about doing good. He manifested His Deity through His humanity. His sacred hand touched that loathsome leper. It was His hand that touched him; it was His Deity that cleansed him.

"A Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind." And there is a people who are brought to feel that they need this hiding place. O it is a wonderful thing to be taught by the Spirit our real state and condition in the ruin of the fall! We see the effects of these ruins in a ruined world. We can read the consequences of it in the daily newspapers. It is evident.

"O thou hideous monster, Sin,  
What a curse hast thou brought in!  
All creation groans through thee,  
Pregnant cause of misery." (Gadsby's 154)

Can you say that from your own hearts feeling, both as you see the effects of it in the world, and feel the same in your ruined soul?

But "a Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind." An absolute God would be no hiding place and no covert and no shadow. The holy, glorious God is a consuming fire. He cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence; and where sin is it must be punished, and punished with death. O what gratitude we owe unto God for His unspeakable Gift, the Lord Jesus Christ! It is a blessed mystery. I wish it might be revealed in our hearts so as to bring that mystery in all its blessed benefits and consequences. We speak of and see and feel the consequences of the fall, and of sin, but O the blessed benefits and consequences of that unspeakable Gift of Jesus Christ in whom is another fullness! When man fell, he fell unto a fullness of iniquity and all its terrible consequences and effects. It was complete. Some of you know it, know it in your own experience, in your own soul. We see its completeness as we lay our fellow-men in the grave. O that the Lord would impress upon our hearts, and upon the hearts of our young people, the solemn reality of sin! Only such will be given to need and seek the greater reality of salvation.

"A Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind." What is this wind? It is not from heaven; it is all the blasts, the influences from hell itself. O the power of the devil! In the first place, one will be brought to know the terrible power of the holy law of God. When that law enters into the conscience by the Holy Spirit, it will produce death upon everything of the flesh. Asaph said: "My flesh and my heart faileth." (Psalm 73:26) That is true in all men naturally. We must naturally fail as we get older, but to my mind that was a spiritual failing: "My flesh and my heart faileth." And when the holy law enters into the conscience, the flesh fails, it dies. Everything that a man has and has hoped in is brought to ruin – and O how we shall need then a hiding place! We shall be exposed to the holy law of God, the wrath of God in His holy law against sin.

O blessed Man! O the mystery of it, that almighty God should sigh human breath! What a divine contrivance, the effect of infinite wisdom and grace and goodness. Had salvation been possible by any other means than the sending of God's dear Son to suffer, to bear reproach and shame and ignominy and death, that way the Lord would have taken; but there was no other way, no other ransom. Nothing less could hide a sinner from the wind but the Man Christ Jesus.

We might at this point well ask ourselves whether we have been made to feel our need, and whether we have ever fled for refuge to this blessed Man, this hiding place. And when this work of grace begins, it has no respecter of persons. If it comes to a rich man with all his wealth, he will become poor. If this grace comes to a wise man, a scientist or whatever he might be, he will become a fool – not in his natural faculties. The Lord does not reduce people to idiots in order to save them. Not that at all. He still retains his natural wisdom, but he is brought to realise that all his wisdom can never know God. Brought to believe from his own experience that the world by wisdom knows not God – and he will become a fool. And if this grace should come to a mighty man, then all his might will be turned into weakness; and when this grace comes to a proud man, a Pharisee, then it turns his comeliness into corruption. To put all that together, and to see the state and condition of a

poor convinced sinner, he will need a refuge, need a hiding place. And how precious that will make this blessed Man!

"A Man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." A tempest is something more than a wind. There is the hail, the lightning. We read of it in the New Testament: the man who built his house upon the sand – and when the rain descended, and the winds blew upon that house, it fell. It had no foundation. But "whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them...is like a man which built an house, digged deep." (Luke 6:47-49) People dig deep that in their experience are led to realise that there is nothing but sinking sand in their nature, or in the world – and they need a rock, they need a foundation. Upon these points it is well if we can find this in our religion.

"A covert from the tempest." These tempests embrace those things that are internal, tempests of the soul, when the enemy shall come in like a flood. The fiery darts of the devil. The terrible tempest that unbelief raises in the soul. Do you know what these internal tempests are? Unbelief and pride, non-submission to the will of God, infidelity; and often at the same time there are united trials without – as we were trying to speak, I think, last Wednesday. When contrary things, together with internal conflicts, unite, we wonder where the scene will end. But this blessed Man is a covert from the tempest.

Some of our dear people are passing through tempests in affliction and in sorrows, and if they had no hiding place and no covert, O what a deplorable state they would be in! My friends, everything in this world since the fall is calculated to our destruction, apart from this hiding place, this rock that is higher than we, this blessed Man, infinite, eternal God in human nature. A divine Substitute, standing in the very place and room of His dear people. He is the shield, and this hiding place and covert represents the shield. The curse of the law, which we deserve, fell upon this hiding place and this covert, this shield.

O look at this hiding place and this covert, which is a shield as we see Him in divine love going forth for the salvation of His people! O what a covert – perfect righteousness!

"Righteousness to full perfection;  
Must be brought, lacking nought,  
Fearless of rejection." (Gadsby's 800)

I do feel this, that everything in nature, everything in the world, is militated against the grace of God in the hearts of His poor pilgrims. But "the righteous shall hold on his way. And this message is to be given unconditionally, under all circumstances: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him." (Isaiah 3:10)

"A hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." But what a rest, what a comfort this hiding place and covert and shield will be when the storm of death, which is coming on apace, shall reach us! O what a storm that is, my friends! If anybody speaks lightly of death, it is very solemn. I know that some have been much blessed, and have been given such a sweet anticipation of the glory that is to be revealed, that the fear of death has been taken away, but death is solemn. It is a storm. It is the last enemy. But here is a Man, a Man who has suffered death, tasted death for every man. And what makes this refuge, this hiding place, this covert, so real is that in all this He is a Substitute. All that should fall upon His people fell upon that dear Redeemer, that Mediator. He is a real Man.

I cannot tell you what I feel with respect to the preciousness of His Person, Emmanuel, God with us. If He was not a Man, we should be hopeless. If He was not God, we should be hopeless, and –

"That human heart He still retains,  
Though throned in highest bliss." (Gadsby's 23)

"A Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." This takes in and embraces all the pathway in providence as well. I know the world have calamities, they have afflictions, but they are different. Not different perhaps in the thing itself, but the purposes of God are to be taken into account with respect to His people. The covenant of grace orders all their afflictions and pains and sorrows, all their adversities, losses and crosses. And whereas men generally have their own palliative, their own means of escape, and their own form of consolation, the Lord's people are brought to trust in the Lord.

The communion which His dear people have at times in the midst of their conflicts and the tempests that arise in their circumstances, in their families, together with the conflicts of their soul, are among those things which keep their faith in exercise: "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of (their) spirit." (Isaiah 38:16)

"As rivers of water in a dry place." This world is a dry place. David knew it: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." (Psalm 63:1) Do you know that? If you know these things, it will give you some intimation as to whether this hiding place and this covert is yours. Of what use, to what purpose, would a hiding place be, if there were none that were pursued? What use would a covert be, except to those who are exposed? And what use would rivers of water be, except to those that are thirsty and in a dry place, a dry land?

While we should be thankful for the blessings of God's wonderful creation and His providence, these Scriptures come to the experience of the soul. And I do think about our young people. Everybody knows they have a body, and everybody knows the demands of the body and of the natural mind; but what a mercy it is when we are first brought to know we have a soul, and that the things that in the mercy of God reach and sustain the body will not do for the soul. We need a different kind of success for the soul than we do for the body. We need a different kind of riches for the soul from what we do for the body. We need a different kind of wisdom to go to heaven than we need for this world. A great thing if the Lord will teach our young people that; it would put things in their right places, it would indeed. It is good here and there to hear the Lord dealing with young people. I well remember my own feelings when I was young. I thought the world was a big place, and I should see as much of it as I could. Plenty of room to move about, plenty to feed one's ambitions, especially in the gaiety of the world, and then in its false and light religion. But my friends, what is necessary is deep conviction of sin. That will make a wound that nothing but the Gospel can heal; and that will give us to feel our need of a hiding place and a covert, when we realise that this world can afford us no streams but those which have sin and death in them.

"Rivers of waters in a dry place." It is just that river of which David speaks: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." (Psalm 46:4) And that river, and this blessed Man, is nothing but the fullness of the Godhead in Him bodily. O what a full river it is! It is a river of the water of life, and is clear as crystal. There is not a speck in it, it is sinless. It can never corrode; it brings life where it comes. Streams - "As rivers of water in a

dry place." And this river and its streams flow to the church. "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her." God in Christ. These streams from the river are His everlasting love, His saving grace, His plenteous redemption, His divine virtue, His heavenly power, His unsearchable riches, His immutable love. Have you ever tasted any of these streams, and realised that without them you must perish, become like parched ground? As we were reading in the 35th Isaiah: "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." (v.7) This is an experience. It is not something to read in the 35th Isaiah. O may we look into our souls and into our experience to see whether these things are really in our religion!

"As rivers of water in a dry place." Be thankful if this world is made a dry place, a wilderness to us. I again think of our young people. I have them much in my mind, and the response that we should have made 60 years ago, I often think may be in their mind. They might say to me: "Be thankful this world is a wilderness? How discouraging it is! How do you expect, us to get on and get through?" It is true that it is a wilderness, but O if that gracious hand of God should touch your eyes and ears, you would prove that there is nothing in this world but what has sin and death and destruction in it finally. But at the same time, the Lord will not leave you stranded like that, remember that. Salvation is not only for you to be separated from the world, and to come out of it, and to just leave you there. It gives you something better. And these streams from the river of God in a dry place will give you something better than all the world calls good and great. You might not think so at the present, but O to have your eyes open to see, and your heart to feel, so that Christ becomes the very centre of your life, and the end and object of your faith! O there is something more than this poor dying world to be possessed!

"As rivers of water in a dry place." These rivers of water are conveyed by the Holy Spirit, and through the means of grace. For these streams are to make glad the city of God; they flow through the Word of God. They flow through the preaching of the Gospel. The Lord has been pleased, by the foolishness of preaching, to save those that believe; and those that believe are brought to believe from their experience. They believe by opposites meeting. They believe because they are brought to destruction and death in themselves, and at the same time have some manifestation of the life and glory and grace and mercy that is in Christ Jesus. So the streams flow through the Word of God, and the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. O what a portion, what an inheritance, through this Man!

"A Man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Well, we shall have to know something of the weariness of the land. It suggests a hot country, a burning sun, where there is no water; but this blessed Man is as rivers of water in a desert when their tongues fail for thirst. And a shadow, in the same weary land, of a great rock. O what a rock Christ is! He is the Rock. His work is perfect. He is a rock that is higher than we are. He is higher than all sin. He has a name that is above every name. What a shadow this is! It is the same shadow under which the church of God rests: "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Solomon 2:3)

But is this a weary land to us? We often sing: "Weary of earth, myself and sin." It is a very comprehensive expression. Have you ever expressed it before God in secret? This weary world, this crazy, noisy world; this world full of woe, of murder, of immorality. "Weary of earth" – and then have you come back to self – weary of self, a body of sin and death? "Dear Jesus" – it brings us to Him, there is nothing else left –

"Weary of earth, myself, and sin,  
Dear Jesus, set me free,  
And to Thy glory take me in,  
For there I long to be." (Gadsby's 386)

You look at David in the 57th Psalm: "Be merciful unto me, O Lord, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." That is an experience. This Man is the high tower, He is the strong rock, He is the strong habitation whereunto His poor people resort. "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Well, you may feel this in your secret moments often, as you lie upon your bed at night. O value those night seasons, my friends. Sometimes it is a time of heart searching, of conviction of sin. But when you turn to the Lord Jesus, have you ever felt that in the silent watches of the night your eyes look up unto Him? You lift up your poor soul unto the Lord, with all your sins, your ruin, weakness, unprofitableness, sin-stained life, together with the bewildering world; you look up unto Him, and at times feel such a rest beneath the shadow of his wings, of this great Rock in a weary land.

Well this, as far as I know it, is the inward life of faith, the labour of faith. It is not easy to go to heaven. It is impossible but for faith. It is easy to go to hell, that broad way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. There is no opposition there; there is no spiritual weariness there; they know nothing of the wind and the tempests in their soul; they know nothing of a tempting devil. But when grace reaches the heart it reverses the whole, and you are immediately against the tide and against the wind.

"I wrestled hard toward heaven,  
'gainst wind and storm and tide,  
Now, like a weary traveller..." says Rutherford.

He entered into the desired haven.

This is the tribulation through which we must enter into the Kingdom, but the whole of it is in Jesus Christ. Sometimes your poor soul, when it gets an inkling of who and what He is, and His glory, and when He manifests a little of Himself to your soul – what a hiding place, what a covert, what a comfort – His divine perfection! Why, if He were not who He is, there would be no shelter, no safety, no security in Him. Don't you feel at times that you really are rooted and grounded in grace? Have you not been brought at least to that assurance of faith, that if He will He can make you clean? Have you not been brought to that assurance of faith that His salvation, if He would bring it into your heart, would be greater in you than all your destruction? It has been a point with me in my low places, to have just a glimpse of One that is mightier than I. O to know Him, to view Him as the mighty God in human nature, and the victory He got, my friends! So that He still is the hiding place and covert. Greater He is than all the powers of hell. It is righteousness which justifies from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. So that precious work was so complete, the law was so satisfied by the Lord Jesus that His people are complete in Him, and accepted in the Beloved. O what a rest, to be able to rest in the Lord under all conditions, and wait patiently for Him!  
Amen.