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Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, Sunday evening, 15th
December 1963

"I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out,
and find pasture." John 10:9.

How important it is to seek the witness of the Spirit that we are one of Christ's sheep. You remember that in Matthew there is a very solemn division between the sheep and the goats, and that discriminating line of divine sovereignty which runs through the whole of the Word of God, runs through the whole of mankind in every age; and doubtless runs through this congregation and it makes the first verse of the chapter exceedingly searching: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

I would just say for the encouragement of those that tremble at this first verse - and it is a mercy if we do; for says the Lord, "Heaven is My throne, the earth is my footstool, but to this man will I look, to him that is of a humble spirit and that trembleth at my word." The Lord's people, His sheep, are shut up to this door. In their soul's experience they are brought to such a state of wretchedness and ruin and weakness that they have no power in themselves to climb up any other way and are thankful that the Lord Jesus is the Way, that He is the Door; that He has a fullness which lacks nothing; that He has divine ability; and that He fulfils the desires of them that fear Him and performs all things for His people.

'I am the door, by Me if any man enter in.' This door - the Lord Jesus, is set before His people as the only entrance, into the truth, the only entrance into the kingdom of grace, the only entrance into the Church of God, and the entrance finally into heaven itself; and He is the entrance, the door, because He is Emmanuel, God with us. A living entrance, a living way; and thus you enter in through Him, partake of Him; put Him on; put Him on as the whole armour of God. I wish I could convey what is felt upon this point. We see a poor needy sinner, taught by the Holy Ghost and gathered from all quarters. As we were reading, every other way is hedged up, but this way that is set before them.

Now to go through this gate and to enter in by Christ is to go through Him, that is to say that He is the door in His office as a Mediator. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." He is the only way of access unto God. "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father" and there is no other way. "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is" and no man cometh unto the Father except he is drawn.

'I am the door, by Me if any man enter in.' We concluded this morning by faith getting a glimpse of what is inside of that door; what it opens to faith - and the Apostle speaks of this: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, for them that wait for Him." But the Spirit reveals them, and the Spirit is the porter that opens the door, that is, that reveals Christ Jesus, that takes of His things and shows them. O some of you have been knocking long at this door, for Christ is the door of mercy, He is the door of hope; and writing to the Church at Philadelphia, it was said, "I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it;" but what we need my friends, is for this divine porter to open to faith the Person and work, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Ministers are under-shepherds, and I feel it is warrantable to say that they are under-porters to open the gates! "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." O, the responsibility and the weight of professing to be an under-shepherd and to lead people ministerially in their soul's experience through the wilderness to a city of habitation; to open up the Gospel, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, so that His people may go through the gates.

I believe that, there are some who have long been waiting, knocking, at mercy's door. But you will never die disappointed, because of the promise, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me," "Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find." But this asking, seeking and knocking is the inward influence of the Holy Spirit and a very blessed evidence of the life of God in the soul, but .the whole of it, all the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart converges, if I might so speak, upon this one entrance. There is nothing can be penetrated except as the porter the Holy Spirit, reveals the holy things of God.

The provision is made in the Gospel. 'I am the door, by me if any man enter in,' and that is put very mercifully, 'any man enter in' - no respecter of persons. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people," and that is spoken to all people that have no trust in themselves, who can truly says -

*Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.*

(Gadsby's 303)

O then, seeing what kind of people congregate outside of his door striving to enter in, labouring to enter into rest, 'I am the door, by Me if any man enter in.' So that there is an entering in by faith, through Christ, into the kingdom of the gospel of His grace. We will never enter into the experience of any truth unless we enter by the Holy Spirit through Christ. That is, to know the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

"By me if any man enter in he shall be saved." Here we have salvation: 'He shall be saved.' Entering in through Christ is entering into everything that is saving, all things that pertain to life and to godliness. O to be brought into the truth by the Spirit through the Lord Jesus! Through Him, so as to partake of Him, as in the next verse; "I come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." It is to be all taken up in Him and by Him to go through this door. 'He shall be saved.'

We will need to be saved from ourselves, just what we are as sinners; and you will be brought to need it - need salvation from head to foot, inside and outside. Need it as you feel that the dire contagion fills the veins and spreads the poison to the heart; that every fibre of our being is impregnated with sin and therefore, in a state of pollution and corruption. O to be saved from such a condition as resulted from the fall, and by our own transgressions! What a great thing it is to be saved from self. If we are, there is nothing else to be saved from and that is no small consideration. We may look at sin generally, the terrible havoc it has made in the world, the sorrows, the diseases, the cruelties, the abominations; but my friends, it is when we have our eyes opened to see and to feel our own ruined state as sinners that we shall need salvation, and faith will see in Christ the only hope. O to enter in through the door and receive the benefits, the virtues, the power of Christ's most precious sin-atonement blood! Salvation is the removal of sins and it is removed by its transfer. See, this blessed door is everything. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Made that holy sacred Man to be sin for us, who knew no sin. Had He known sin He would have been no Substitute, no Saviour. It would have been no use to offer His blood, but He knew no sin. How precious is the doctrine of Christ; His sacred sinless humanity.

'Shall be saved.' The greatest fact in the work of salvation was completed upon the cross. O my friends, when faith looks at that door and sees a suffering Saviour lifted up between heaven and earth as an Intercessor, a Substitute, a Mediator - and the Holy Spirit bears witness in the heart that He is there as a Great High Priest; that there is more virtue in Him and in His sacrifice and in His finished work than there is sin, pollution and corruption in us! 'Shall be saved.'

'I am the door, by me if any man enter in.' There will be an entering into the truth, and going through Christ the door, the truth will enter into the soul. 'He shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.' Now this going in and out as I view it respects several things - perhaps more particularly in respect of liberty. Thus to enter in the right way through the door into the City, they will have liberty, to go in and out as the children of a home. It is very sweet liberty; sweet when you feel it at the throne of grace and find access through Christ unto God. Sweet it is when you have liberty in meeting together and feel the Holy Spirit, in His sacred influence, bringing the truth into your heart, giving you to feel that sacred contact between a living Head and your poor needy soul.

'Go in and out' with respect to the Word of God. O how good it is when the Holy Spirit opens to the understanding the Scriptures! But then there is another sense, 'He shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.' There is a going in as you have come today, in the assemblies of the saints. But we shall not remain here. O there will be a time for those who here have entered into the kingdom of God, into the Invisible Church through Christ, who will enter into heaven by the same door; but while we are here there will be a going in and a going out. Tomorrow, there will be a going out to our several duties. We are in the world; be a mercy if we are not of it! But O if we are saved in going in to so partake of the gospel to the nourishment of our faith and the strengthening of our hope; to find the Lord Jesus to be our sanctuary, to be made unto us wisdom and to go out into the world in our lawful occupations and take, as it were, the influence, the sacred savour of Christ in the truth where we go, why my friends, that is to walk with God as did Enoch, so that in that sense it is very blessed. Those who go into the door and are saved and go in and out and find pasture.

But there is yet another way as I view it of going in and out and finding pasture. There are days of darkness, days of conflict, cloudy days when the sun is obstructed. So that there is a going in in the liberty of the Spirit and there is a going out into darkness, into conflict. Not that a sinner once in, goes out of Christ, O, but as in nature, so in grace, there will be changes! "Seed time and harvest, summer and winter day and night, shall not cease."

'I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.' He will even find pasture in the exercise of soul under a sense of desolation, in bondage, under a sense of destitution and poverty. O this is a part of divine teaching! And there are many things, in that teaching under the chastening hand of God, which do feed the soul, which increase knowledge and therefore, "blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest and teachest him out of Thy law." He is a blessed man, and some of you have known what this going in under the shining of His countenance and then going out as it were into darkness and conflict under the hidings of His face, but you have found pasture in both senses. "Though He give you the water of affliction and the bread of adversity, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers" and therefore, there is teaching, and there is feeding and there is strengthening under all the discipline and chastening of God, who is too good to be unkind and too wise to err. Indeed there are those who, because they have no changes, fear not God.

'By me if any man enter in he shall be saved; and shall go in and out and find pasture.' Well now, this is to those who enter through Christ into the sheepfold. The Church is compared to a fold. In Solomon's Song it is compared to a garden enclosed. The Lord Jesus is round about His people. He is the defence of His sheep in the fold from the wolf; He has promised to be "a fire round about them and their glory in the midst."

In Ezekiel it tells us where these pastures are: "I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers and in all the habitable places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture and upon the high mountains of Israel, they shall feed upon the mountains." Three times in those two verses the

church and the pasture is spoken of as upon the mountains, and in the 2nd chapter of Isaiah we read, "In the last days shall the mountain of the Lord's house be established in the top of the mountains;" and it means this, that the Church of God and the whole provision that He has made in the Church, the constitution of the Church has a unique position, it is higher than anything in this world. There are the governments of this world necessarily, but O my friends, what a different nature are the politics of nations and the blessed truths and everlasting doctrines of the Gospel, and it is a great thing to feel it! Thy sheep, these people, the Lord says by Jeremiah, "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion."

Well, as Moses esteemed the worst part of Christ better than the best things of this world, so the lowest things of the kingdom of God are higher than the highest things of this world. Have you ever felt that? You must enter into the door and behold the glory and the rich provision that there is in Christ and be brought to feel your need of it, before you will appreciate that. It was upon that basis that the hymn writer sings

*Boast not, ye sons of earth,
Nor look with scornful eyes;
Above your highest mirth,
My saddest hours I prize;
For though my cup seems filled with gall,
There's something secret sweetens all.*

(Gadsby's 307)

O to know that and all the sweetness, all the blessedness, all the strength, all the grace, and all the glory derives from this Person who is the entrance into the kingdom of grace here and the entrance into the kingdom of glory hereafter. So that upon the mountains of Israel shall they feed, by the rivers.

We would look then, at a little of this pasture that is provided. One thing is the Word of God. Jeremiah found it: "Thy Word was found and I did eat it, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." It is a very experimental expression - "Thy word was found" and therefore, it intimates there was a searching for something in particular. Have you a case? Have you an exercise when you go to the Word of God? It may be in some special pathway that you look into the Word for some consolation, some guidance, some light upon your path, and you are led to a certain portion, it so fits your case that you say I found it - a handful of purpose. Now and again it is found in a cluster. Sometimes you may find in the Word of God, in the green pasture, a cluster, as for instance - and mark this, you will be brought to need it - "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." That indicates, that such a one to whom that Scripture is made a green pasture, would fear, he would be in a helpless condition, he would need to be upheld, he would be full of fear. O, but lighting upon that Word, he would say "Thy Word was found and I did eat it."

So there is the Word of God provided in the Gospel; and very important it is - and you might well consider how you read the Word of God. What it is made to us. O the treasures it contains! "Sufficient to thoroughly furnish a man unto all good works." We would need no other book really; if the Word of God was the only volume we possessed, there is enough there.

But then these pastures particularly are the doctrines of the gospel, for Christ Himself, who is the bread of life and the water of eternal life; and these pastures are upon the mountains of Israel, they are unknown to the world. We have meat to eat that the world knows nothing of. O it is a great thing to know the Lord by revelation! To have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of

Him; and then all the doctrines of grace will be nourishment. They will be green pastures to the soul who will feed upon them.

The Person of Christ. Everything is in Him. Do you believe it? Peter was asked the question - "Whom say ye that I am?"— could you say with Peter? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is of vital importance. Do you believe in the Son of God? If you do - how do you believe in Him? This will connect up with the door. Do you believe in Him because His Spirit's work in your heart shuts up every other way of escape and leaves that door alone before you? No other hope but Jesus Christ. And would you believe in Him as feeling that in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"? When you believed in Him was there a connexion between Him as revealed in the Word of God and the needs of your salvation? O look for this my friends! To give a reason for what you believe. In my little way, I do feel this - that my believing in the Son of God is by an experience of my deep need of Him and of a sense of ruin without Him. It will make Christ precious to your soul, and that will lead you to everything that He is and has done.

You take this - "He of God is made unto us wisdom." and if so, then that sinner is made to know his ignorance. Not naturally, the Lord does not reduce His people to imbeciles in order to save them. Why, the wisest man in this country, if he was called by grace, would become a fool that he might be made wise unto salvation. "Made unto us wisdom, righteousness" - and this will be something to feed upon. Those who have been reduced to filthy rags - Your best stained and dyed with sin, your all nothing worth - O to behold by faith the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus: The righteousness of His sacred Person and His sinless life; the righteousness of an honoured law, a satisfied law. The righteousness of perfect obedience and that transferred to a sinner. These are pastures upon which a soul feeds. Sanctification, O how attractive is that word to a sinner: "The very God of peace, sanctify you wholly." I have prayed this - and felt to need it. Sanctify you in every part of your being. - to be separated unto God. Separation is not only to be separated from sin and sinners and from the world, but if it is a right separation it unites; it is a separation that unites a sinner unto God and unto His things. I have longed for sanctification, to feel its sweet and sacred influence in the soul to produce a spiritual mind, a sober mind, a calm and heavenly frame.

'I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.' Of course it will need hunger and thirst in order to appreciate pasture; and it will greatly indicate whether we are Christ's sheep as to what pasture we need. You see, when the raven was sent out from the ark, it could live upon the carrion of the dead bodies that floated about, live upon anything. But the dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot. Could not live upon that unclean food, but had to come back to the ark. O take heed as to what pasture you can feed upon my friends! It seems that some people can feed upon good pasture and bad, and mix it all up together, but if we chew the cud and part the hoof, you may depend upon it we shall neither be able to eat the husks that the swine do eat, neither shall we be able to follow the voice of a stranger.

'I am the door.' Blessed be His name! O if the Holy Spirit would reveal Him to a poor sinner as much as to say, 'Through Me you will enter into everything here, and I will be the door at last into Heaven.' He has not entered into temples made with hands, but into Heaven itself; He entered there with His own blood, so that He is the door to Heaven and He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, who entered there with His own blood. O may we follow on to know the Lord. And those that hear His voice, O may they have grace to follow Him in the green pastures of the ordinances of His house!

Amen.