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Sermon preached by Mr. F.L.Gosden, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday evening, 9th February 1964.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Psalm 116:7

The entrance of sin into the world has made everything restless, in a state of convulsion, disarranged, complete confusion. This can be observed every day, everywhere we go. What a state of restlessness and confusion, no contentment, and what strife, chaos, murders!

"O thou hideous monster, Sin,
What a curse hast thou brought in!" (Gadsby's 154)

When Adam and Eve were created, and placed in that beautiful garden, they were perfect people; there was perfect peace, perfect complete happiness and rest, nothing to disturb. There was nothing that could hurt; there was no death there, no ravenous beasts. Unthinkable that the glorious God should create ravenous beasts that could tear man to pieces! There were none, they were tame. There were no thorns to roses, no weeds in the garden, blessed place! But sin has turned the earth upside-down, and "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isaiah 57:20) And when we consider this state of things, and look within, we must confess, if we see self in a true light, that we are no better; and we know the confusion, and restlessness and chaos, we know the weeds that are within – the wild beasts of our carnal reason, of unbelief, of rebellion. We are no better within.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." We concluded, this morning, by observing that this was the voice of living faith in the heart. It speaks by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and we may repeat what we then said, that if we have a living faith, that faith is not silent. Living faith is not a dumb faith, a motionless, helpless faith; it is a mighty grace, it is a root grace. If we are living trees of God's right-hand planting, the root to our religion is faith. Unbelief is a root evil, but blessed be God, all the work of grace in the heart is greater than all the work and devastation of sin. O what a blessed truth that is, if you feel it for yourself, if by a God-given faith, and the true light shining, we behold the glories of God in Christ, that will ever swallow up all that we see in self! It will indeed!

In this psalm, the Psalmist sinks very low: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." Yet says faith: "Return unto thy rest." This suggests that there had been a departure from this rest. Some of you may know this, under the power of unbelief; and when the Lord for wise ends should hide His face and bring you into trial, under the fiery darts of the devil, and cross your purposes, and blast your gourds, you will find that you are far away from rest and peace. It is surprising how legal we are, though we may have faith, may sit under the truth for years; yet when we get there, until the Lord returns, a carnal reason begins to manipulate a way out. But we shall never find it. "Who can make that straight, which God hath made crooked?" (Ecclesiastes 7:13) Who can make darkness light, but the Lord alone? Therefore, faith's voice is heard, heard in the midst of affliction, and when one is brought low. "The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me." Faith, beholding that great God in Christ, encourages the soul, as it did David in the 42nd Psalm: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"

and why art thou disquieted within me?" Notwithstanding the deep which calls unto deep at the noise of His waterspouts, yet "Hope thou in God," turn your eyes away from waterspouts, away from deeps, and "hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

"Return unto thy rest." We would then, as enabled, try and speak of this rest. It is Christ's rest. In the 4th chapter of the Hebrews, where this rest is so sweetly brought before us, it is called "His rest." "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1) Well, take it as a whole, a "return to rest" is to be by the Spirit transformed, by the renewing of your minds, from all things that we have mentioned: the consequence of sin in the world and in self, and a body of sin and death; to be transformed and delivered from the influence of all natural things, and translated into the things of God, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." (Colossians 1:13) There is no rest there, no happiness there, no peace there, "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son," into His marvellous light. Well, that is a returning to rest in the general sense of it, but may we be helped to look at particulars. And the first thing to remember is this, that to enter into rest, to labour to enter into rest, is an act of faith. "We which believe have entered into rest," so that there is a rest here below, a rest in grace, a rest in the Gospel, a rest in Christ. But "there remaineth a rest to the people of God," so that the rest that His people are favoured to enter into here is a prelude to eternal rest. (Hebrews 4:3,9)

The first thing that we should name with respect to this rest is the Person of the Son of God, God in Christ. He is the only rest. An absolute God could never be a rest to a sinner. He is a consuming fire. But O when Emmanuel's form appears - not only a Man, a real Man, a sinless Man - but God in human flesh, with all the fulness of the Godhead, with all divine perfections and attributes in incarnate flesh, O this is the point of rest. It is because God is what He is. You would never rest in anything except that initial to faith. The first thing that faith believes in is God: "For he that cometh unto God must believe that He is," and that is the first rest to faith, to believe that God is what the Word declares Him to be, what He declares Himself to be, but that God in human nature. O what a rest it is! Have you entered into it? Has it ever entered into you by the Holy Spirit? That fulness that is in Him is different from the fulness that is in the world, and there will be a distinct sense of that blessed contrast in your experience. The world is full, full as it can be, and since the Fall it is as full as the devil can fill it.

O how solemn it is to be a man! The innocent beasts, the little birds, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the fields - these are God's work - there is no sin in them. Only man is vile - that is all; and yet he was the head of creation. I do not wonder that when David went out at eventide and beheld the moon and the stars, he exclaimed: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4) Yet that man, who has sunk lower than the beasts, for his sake, the Son of God, that holy, harmless Lamb of God, came to take his place, to be a complete and perfect substitute. Now this is a point of rest. Do you feel it, as the Holy Ghost may convince you of your state, and then reveal to you who and what Christ is? Are you not thankful and adore Him in the majesty of His Godhead? And yet, to see those spiritual blessings flow through Him to reach the hearts of unworthy sinners, this is what faith returns to from everything else, and in this rest there is such an attraction, that perhaps most blessed invitation in the Word of God takes effect: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) So this glorious Person becomes all

and in all in your soul's experience and in your affections, both in your need of Him, and in your desire after Him. You cast anchor into His wounded side as into the Rock of Ages, and you rest. Well, I feel that is the first point of rest, to rest in God in Christ. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect." (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Then there will be a rest in His atoning blood. We were singing just now: "With my burden I begin; Lord, remove this load of sin." (379) It will be the greatest burden that you will have to carry, and a burden of sin and death we shall have to drag with us to the grave, but for faith to be brought to Calvary, and to see there a fountain opened. And whatever the Lord Jesus did is eternal; that fountain is ever open, it ever flows, can never lose its power; its virtue partakes of His divine Person, it flows through His humanity.

A beautiful type we have of the Israelites in Egypt; they were to sprinkle the door posts with blood, so that when the destroying angel flew over the city and saw the blood, he passed over. Have you ever felt rest in the atonement of Christ?

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend." (Gadsby's 158)

O it is a rest, and it is an attraction to poor sinners, the truth that sin is pardonable, that sin and a sinner can be separated, that God can love a sinner and hate his sins! Therefore, there will be a rest in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there will be a returning to it, which is the same thing as labouring to enter into it.

Another rest is this: to rest in the promises of the Gospel. Not to take them because they are written in the Scriptures. If you can rest upon the letter of the Word, and live upon unapplied promises, you are very seriously near a dead professor. To rest in the promises of the Gospel is to have those promises applied; and if you do, there will be an experience where you will need them, and where they will fit and be suitable. Take this promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Well, you could not rest on that by reading it in the 13th chapter Hebrews. You may depend upon it, if that promise is to be applied and brought warm into your heart, there will have been a trembling fear lest the Lord **should** leave you or forsake you.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." Another point of rest is this: to rest in the will of God. We shall never rest in our own will – that is rebellion. But what a rest it is "to lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His!" (472) Have you ever rested there? You may depend upon it, the Psalmist did when he said: "The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me." (Psalm 116:6) O to give up, as it were, to fall flat before Him, and to trust in Him! To say with Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (ch.13:15) That is a rest, a rest in the will of God; and it is a rest in Him in all His divine perfections. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people." (Psalm 125:2) There will be a rest in a sense of divine security, and that you may feel when you are brought into adversity, to the ends of the earth, when you feel to be like a wilderness and parched ground. O what a rest that is, to behold the fulness of God in Christ, that He "has heaven and earth at His command, and waits to answer!" (132) Now when you look outside of these things, if you know these things, there will be an inward exercise. As I think we said lately, the life of God in the soul will taste that the Lord is gracious, will sometimes feel Him by the hand of faith and

touch Him, as did the woman, and draw virtue from Him. Sometimes you will hear His still, small voice in your heart, which will break down your opposition and rebellion, so that with Elijah you cover your head with your mantle, and realise the majesty and glory of God in Christ. You will rest in His divine perfections. You, a poor, weak, dying creature, under the protection of Him who is omnipotent, mighty to save, infinite in wisdom. O says faith, as she beholds this glorious Man, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul!" It is a sweet rest.

You will rest sometimes under a sense of His omniscience – to truly believe that "He sees us when we see not Him, and always hears our cry." (308/2) We might ask ourselves a question here. Are you really glad from your very heart of the perfections of Jehovah, and that they are in a Mediator, in a Redeemer? Are you glad that He is omniscient, and sees everything in you, and that His eye is upon you, that He hears every word, and by Him actions are weighed? Are you glad? Bad as you are, bad as I am, O I am thankful that He is what He is, because all those divine perfections are in His ability! And you will rest in His ability, "For He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and you will rest there. (Ephesians 3:20)

There is another rest. You will rest in the love of God to His people – His sovereign, everlasting love. Nothing can divert its flow, nothing can divert that love from its object. He will never take His love from one and set it upon another. He rests in His love. It is the rest of complacency, of satisfaction. The Lord is satisfied with His people. He sees in them the travail of His soul. There is no divorce in the love of God, in that heavenly bridegroom: "Whom once He loves, He never leaves, but loves them to the end." (351) Nothing can separate from it. The water cannot drown it; not all the floods of His sufferings, and persecutions, and reproach and ignominy; not all the curse of God could drown that love.

"On such love, my soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free;
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?" (Gadsby's 766)

You will rest there. O to have a persuasion of it! Paul said: "I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate." (Romans 8:38,39) Don't you feel that these are things that your soul rests in, and faith will bid you to return from all your wanderings, when you become overwhelmed with afflictions, and sorrows, and perplexities, by the influence of the world and its difficulties? Return, "return unto thy rest, O my soul."

There is another thing with respect to this rest. There is a rest in divine worship – that beautiful Psalm 132. The rest of faith is in the same thing as the Lord Himself rests. There is something very blessedly mutual between His work of grace in a sinner's heart, and the love of God to that sinner. Whatever is the work of the Holy Ghost is reciprocal, it will all go back. That which the Lord does in your soul will return to Him not void. So we read in that Psalm: "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation," and so will you. Yes, the two meet in Zion, sacred place! – the only place in this world where God dwells, graciously dwells – in Zion, differently from how He fills immensity, different from how He fills the world with His omnipresence. It is a different presence, and some of you know it. O when He is present with a people, there will be His mighty acts, there will be a cleansing of lepers, a casting out of devils, causing the dumb to speak, the lame to walk and

to leap as a hart. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation;" and His people, for that reason, are brought to ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Rest in worship, when the Lord makes the house of God a sanctuary. When He causes you to lie down in green pastures, and leads you beside the waters of quietness, you rest. Do you know it? I believe some of you do.

When you look outside, it is very much like Noah and those with him. There was the deluge outside of destruction, and as the water rose, so the ark rose above it; they were lifted up. I believe there has been a time or two in the Sanctuary of God when I have so rested in Him, felt the sweetness and the sacredness and the love of God. So that you look at Him, and look outside and see the tumults and convulsions of this world in the daily papers, O the dangers, the darkness, the anguish! And then you come to Zion and you rest. Some of you may feel now your very soul resting in these particulars which have their source in the infinite Being of God, in the Person of Jesus Christ. So that all the benefits of His Person and of His work are made available to poor, unworthy sinners.

"This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell," says the Lord.(Psalm 132:14) Who can express the blessedness of a place, a people who are gathered together by the Holy Ghost, His work of grace in their hearts from beginning to end, brought out from all countries, from the north and from the south and from the east and from the west, brought to wander in the wilderness, this world to be made a wilderness to them – it contributes nothing! Then He causes them to pass under the rod, and brings them into the bond of the covenant.

O I believe I have known a little of that rest! Come and sit in the chapel pew, and when the Holy Ghost unfolds the glories of Christ in the Gospel, and if He shows you that glory, what a rest it is! "This is my rest for ever," said the Lord, "here will I dwell; for I have desired it." You will say the same; you will be agreed; you will be able to walk together with God, be agreed. And what does this mean? Why, that we are pilgrims. But these resting places are temporary, that is, as to their experience, although the rest that we have tried to speak of is eternal in its property. If you enter into the rest of the Gospel here, you must eventually enter into eternal rest, because whatever rest you may enjoy here, "there remaineth a rest to the people of God." It brings out the importance of that question: O to be assured that we are one of His people, formed with a special formation to show forth His praise! They are people who are created by the Holy Spirit, and brought into an intimate, indissoluble and eternal union with the Son of God at regeneration. Well, take these things, all of it, and strip it all away from you. What can you say? Could you have any rest? Can you go anywhere else and find satisfaction? Have you any other ground of hope?

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Well, it would indeed be a great strength to hope, and encouragement to faith, if the Holy Ghost would confirm to you that the Lord hath dealt bountifully with you in the covenant of grace; dealt bountifully with you in that covenant, because that covenant is the will of God. It is what He has left to His people, all the riches of His grace, the Gift of His dear Son; and they are fellow-heirs, joint-heirs with Christ. O what a bounteous dealing was that in the covenant with His people! A complete salvation. A covenant that would conduct them safely through all the vicissitudes of life, and its changing scenes, and every dispensation, and that would preserve them and surround them in all their goings. "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" in the covenant, and if He dealt bountifully with thee there, He will deal

bountifully with you here in experience. And the most bountiful dealing is when you are born again, brought into union with Christ, so that all that He is, and all that He has, and all that He has accomplished is theirs.

Bountiful. O says Paul to the Corinthians: "All things are yours" because "ye are Christ's;" and because "Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3:21-23) It brings it back to the beginning; it is all because Christ is God's dear Son, which gives virtue to all that He did. And therefore it takes in the two extremes: "this Man," who can express His glory, "this Man...hath an unchangeable priesthood," and when you see Him by faith as your great High Priest, offering Himself in your place, you will rest; faith will say, He hath dealt bountifully with you upon Calvary.

He deals bountifully with His people when He blesses the provision of His house, when He blesses the Word of God, and makes it life and spirit in your soul; when He blesses the preaching of the Gospel, for it is through the foolishness of preaching He saves those that believe.

Well, it is a poor word on a blessed text, but may the Lord enable His poor people to return. O blessed faith! Listen to its voice: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" – with respect to the rest that remains. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." (John 14:1-3)

Amen.