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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor
on Thursday Evening, May 24. 1979.

Lesson. John 10. vv. 1-30.

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.

There are three considerations in one's spirit as we endeavour to open the sacred discourse this evening. The first is, Jesus Christ Himself enunciated this wonderful truth concerning another of His office characters in the Covenant of Grace towards His chosen people, of Door. Right through the Scriptures we have references to a door. It is of amazing blessedness to those who know by living faith the response our Saviour promised in His peerless sermon on the Mount, when He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."- not, it may be, or, there is a likelihood; it shall be opened unto you. A door is a device of wisdom: we find in Genesis the provision of a door. The Lord is the divine Architect and Builder, so there was a complete plan for the ark, and in the side of it was a door. When the deluge was about to commence the Lord Himself was in the ark and the door was open, because He said to Noah and his family, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." He was there, and the door was open. What a door it is into the Covenant of Grace! You will equate this with the Covenant of Grace, and how the Lord's people entered by His electing love and in the spiritual experience of it by living, holy, precious faith.

I remind you, a door is a device of wisdom. We are so familiar with a door. Think of the meaning of it and the usefulness of it. It is a device for access: it is opened, and it is a device for egress. The door opens and you go out, for He says concerning His sheep, they "shall go in and out, and find pasture." Remarkable is a door. It also indicates that the Lord's people enter into the sheepfold, to a precious Redeemer Himself; to safety, security, peace, comfort, joy, consolation. It is blessed, for the Lord sets before His people an open door. We have

suggested, and this is founded on truth, if you find a door shut, never try to force it open: wait until the Lord opens it. In grace and in the Church of God and in holy providence the dear Lord is pleased, according to His wisdom to set before His people an open door. Think of Laban saying to Abraham's servant, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" What is the logical conclusion and the logic of faith concerning this? It is that the door was open, and the door of their hearts. You see how precious it is. All along the line God's dear people become acquainted with the many meanings of the subject of a door: beautiful it is. Dear friends, if the Lord says to you, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," what is it indicative of? The door of His loving heart is open to your weary soul. O the exquisite beauty of a door! It is therefore of profound blessedness, because as the door of mercy is opened to His seeking people here, they come to the terminal point in their race, to the moment of death, to the time when "at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." All the wise virgins were ready and the door was open. The door of Heaven was open and they went in to the marriage, and the door was shut. The foolish ^{virgins} came, and the door was shut to them. Dear friends, we cannot overemphasise the blessedness and the solemnity of the door. It will either be open or shut to us. How solemn to come to the end and find the door shut, and to hear the Lord say, "I never knew you!" If the door is open to you here below it will synchronise in every area of His Kingdom. The Throne of Grace is a door the Lord has opened for your poor perishing soul. When the Lord first gave you a living hope you saw a door in His wounded side, hands, and feet, and you entered.

And mercy is a door that is so suitable to needy sinners. It is ever open to those who are favoured to seek the Lord. Many doors may be closed on the earth level: there are disappointments, deprivations, frustrations. One door is ever open, - the door of divine mercy, so all who are taught of God, knowing their need of Him will find the door wide open. O the blessedness of this door! And you see a door in relation to our hearts. When our own apostle preached outside Philippi

by the river side, there were those who had the door of their hearts opened. "whose heart the Lord opened." Get the love of Christ in your soul and the door of your heart is open to Christ. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." It will bring sweet delight to the saints of God in singing the beautiful Hymn

"We bow as sinners at Thy feet,

And bid Thee welcome to our heart." (952)

The door is wide open.

See the miracle of door. It is a sweet thing; when the love of Christ dilates your heart there is room for your heart to expand, and the Lord puts His promises, blessings and truth and consolation in your heart, and He puts others into it. It is a wonderful experience to meet one who is a stranger in the flesh, and after a while the Lord opens your heart and they are in it: it is done for ever. Not all the buffetings, trials, sorrows you pass through will make any difference. And a heart dilated because of love will contain the whole of the Church of Christ, the Scriptures of truth and all His dear people, the ransomed Church of God. I should not be able to declare this apart from a spiritual experience of the same in one's own beloved flock. Your dear ones you love in a double way,- in the flesh, and in Christ. O this door! It moves on hinges of everlasting love and grace. So wonderful is door.

Ponder this: in your house you have many doors. There is one you use principally, and it is always open to those you love. Those the Lord loves and who love Him, the door is always open to them. They have got a home, a Father, a Beloved, and a Holy Bridegroom, wonderful provisions, a wonderful wardrobe; the best robe, shoes, a ring, everything. There is Living water, the Bread of Life, immortal meat, and the door is always open. There is eternal life there. It is a sweet theme: the Lord sets before us an open door. Think of the door of your house, access, love inside to welcome you, surround you, follow you, embrace you, to kiss you, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." You can get inside. The door is not locked and there is no response: it is open. O the comparative feeling of security, safety, peace and contentment! You have your own little home and you are content, and your spiritual ^{home} is the priority. "I dwell

among mine own people. I am not seeking the great things of the world."

Think of access through the door, and egress. You go out: it is not all indulgence and resting. You have to go out to the conflict; to a path of tribulation, and the Lord calls you to serve Him. He calls you to a path of adversity which is turned to prosperity, but you will find pasture. The Lord goes before you and He is with you. It is a sweet word; "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." There is a going out to darksome paths and difficulties and anxieties as the Lord calls you. Jacob could not stay at home: he took the long trek by divine command. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in." but you go in and out and find pasture, food for your immortal soul, divine teaching, the presence of your Shepherd. He is watching over you with all your wanderings, (not necessarily wandering from Him) If we wander from Him and we are His sheep the Lord still watches over us and will correct us. Access is the great principle and characteristic in the Text; access to God, to eternal life, to salvation, to the blessings of the sheep fold, to the Church militant and the Church triumphant, and to all the blessings and promises of the Covenant of Grace. John saw a door opened in Heaven. You will be divinely interested in the subject of door,— the way the Lord works, the truth of safety, security, comfort, peace, access, and the blessings you enjoy through the door.

I will take a further step. As you followed the Lesson you noticed in the second verse, "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." "To him the porter openeth." The shepherd entered by the door, and in the Text Jesus says, "I am the door." What does it mean? I was pondering and I believe I could see clearly. Ponder for a moment the basic truth, God in Heaven infinitely holy, glorious, just and true; the Maker living alone, our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Presently the creation of man, and solemnly the absolute fall of man, banished from the earthly paradise of Eden, the curse for sin, death entering; the fruit of sin,— pain, disease, the power of the adversary, the power of darkness: man fallen, lost, vile, corrupt, filthy. (I do not say these things lightly.) What was needed? Soon after the fall of man there was an amazing revelation; the seed of the woman

should bruise the serpent's head, "and thou shalt bruise his heel." and all those died in faith, as in Hebrews 11. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, - not living to see them accomplished, - but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." They died in the faith of the Advent of Christ, the birth of the Saviour, and I suggest to you that the word, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep," refers to the sacred virgin birth of the precious Redeemer. He entered by the door of His incarnation. Whilst the holy doctrine of the omnipotence of God is known by those who fear God, it needed for ~~the~~ salvation the Son of God to become incarnate, so a door was opened in Heaven and He descended into the world, or He could not have become Surety or Substitute. He could not have experienced death or humiliation or exaltation. So by the sacred door of His incarnation, the virgin birth the Lord Jesus entered the fold, "and to him the porter openeth." The Holy Ghost opened the door. "A body hast thou prepared me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." "and to him the porter openeth." O the wonder of the incarnation of Christ! the immaculate conception, the virgin birth of the dear Redeemer. As the power of the ~~power~~ of Highest overshadowed Mary and the Holy Ghost came upon her, so 'that holy thing' was formed by the Holy Ghost in her womb. He assumed a sacred humanity, a true body and reasonable soul into indissoluble union with His divine Person, and so "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." This is a feast for the Lord's people.

In the Text it is, "I am the door," How do we understand this? By His precious Person; Son of God and Son of man; by all He accomplished. Take His precious obedience unto death: by His suffering of the penal wrath of God, His voluntary, vicarious, sacrificial, expiatory death on the cross He opened the door, - He was the Door. Justice was satisfied, atonement was made for sin, a righteousness wrought He needed not for Himself/was provided for His bride and the door was open. Justice and mercy opened wide the door. O the wonder of the equal attributes! Justice and mercy go to meet you and welcome you and fill you with gladness. He condescended to be buried and was laid in the sepulchre and a great stone was rolled to the mouth of it. In our case it is in clay: it is

the same virtually. The sepulchre was sealed, and the precious Body of Christ was there. The door opened on the third day, for the resurrection of the Saviour is attributed in Scripture to His own volition and an act of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. The stone was removed. In a simple way it is as though divine Justice said, "Christ paid the long score of debt and the door is wide open." For all poor, guilty sinners the debt is paid and they are righteous in the eyes of the Father. "I am the door." They are cleansed from sin, pardoned, justified. "I am the door."- precious door! As we have indicated, to living faith, the gift of God, activated, exercised, operated by the Spirit, in Christ you see the door wide open in His riven side. Wonderful is a door of hope for poor, perishing sinners, in His bleeding side, hands and feet. He says, "by me if any man enter in," Faith enters in: faith is so positive, potent, efficacious it does not stand at a distance. The only thing faith knows is contact; entering, receiving virtue; looking, believing, trusting, clinging, and by faith you enter in according to the degree of faith, as in the Hymn; believing on, in, and into Him.

The greatest degree of faith is to experience marriage. "Lord, let the marriage be complete." That is entering in. The bride in the Canticles said concerning entering in, "My beloved is mine, and I am His" She entered in, and He had entered. All those who recognise the sacred gift and activity of faith in their souls know there is a measure of entering in. They are never satisfied to remain in the outer court. It is the nature of union and oneness: you want to get closer, closer, closer. Is that the feeling of your breast? nearer, closer to the Lord Jesus? You enter in. The language is in relation to the Orient. The sheep fold in the Holy Land is an enclosure; there is just an aperture left. The Shepherd gathers the sheep, they know His voice and He brings them into the sheep fold. The door was the Shepherd Himself filling the gap. There is exquisite beauty in this. It was not a wooden door: it was the Shepherd's body lying there, so to get at the sheep an intruder would have to go over the body of the Shepherd. O the wonder of it!

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in,"- into His Church militant, and the Church triumphant: through the door to the path of providence, to the heart of God in the realisation of it. From all

Eternity through Jehovah Jesus they were in the heart of God, seen in the Son of His love. They enter the Scriptures through the door, and they enter Paradise; and all the blessings, promises, riches of the Covenant of Grace through the door. They enter the treasure house through the door. "by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Are you there? Have you entered through the door? We have a portion in the Scriptures that is a complete discourse on the subject of those who enter in and are saved, in King David's pastoral Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; and my cup runneth over. Surely, (this was sweet to me in prayer) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Why it was sweet to me was, I said to the Lord, our fleeting days are passing. I felt concerning it, our fleeting moments are filled with goodness and mercy. I want to praise and crown and adore and laud Him. Every moment is concentrated goodness and mercy to His dear people. "and shall go in and out," There are seasons of being in the banqueting house; indulged, caressed, resting, spiritual reviving, consolation, heavenly bliss. "And out" only in this sense; to a path of tribulation of the Lord's own calling and choosing, to various afflictions. They go in, and out, but they find pasture. It is edible, immortal food for their souls. What a beautiful scene is the pastoral scene! The cows in the meadows of grass and the sheep feed abundantly, and the waters gently glide. So "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." Blessed be God.