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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer,
Clapham, Saturday August 2nd. 1952

Readings: Hebrews 4, Matthew 11, verses 25 - 30

In these verses is a three-fold exhortation, the first being to "labour to enter into that rest". The apostle brings forward the instance of Israel who fell a prey to unbelief and did not, in consequence, enter into the rest of Canaan. But here he speaks of a rest that remains. There is indeed the rest of the Sabbath but there is a rest that remains. There is the Gospel rest that remains to the people of God, and it is this we are exhorted to labour to enter into. It will be a labour to enter into this rest, because of the opposition to it within and without, and the power of unbelief that is in our poor hearts. The best way to labour to enter into this rest is evidently by prayer and by waiting upon God that we may obtain mercy and grace, faith and victory, and to enter into the rest that remains.

This rest in a proper sense is Christ Himself, who has procured that rest for His own dear people wading through sin and temptation and doubt and conflict and bondage, by His obedience and death. It is a rest that we find in the cross of Christ. When one is brought there in the exercise of living faith, the soul finds a wonderful rest. Even if, as to the experience of it, it be enjoyed but for a few moments, it is to sit under His shadow, as we read in the Canticles, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

This is, too, a rest to issue in the eternal rest of Heaven, where all conflict, sin, trouble and affliction and weariness will be left behind. It will be an eternal rest, and this will be a great employment here, so to speak, that is the labour, the labour of faith, a labour that, when we come to change worlds, it may be to enter into and upon an enjoyment of that wonderful rest. At the same time, when the Lord comes

and blesses the soul here, there is a rest, a rest that is to be found in Him, a rest which He gives according to His own promise, which is Himself.

Another exhortation is to "hold fast our profession", to which we are encouraged on the ground of the prevailing power of our great High Priest who is passed into the heavens. The great secret of holding fast in a right way consists in this, and is founded upon and affected by the exercise of faith upon Him and drawing supplies from Him. Nothing is so conducive to a gracious constancy and holding fast as a sensible union with Christ and drawing for the need of our souls from His fulness.

The third exhortation is to "come boldly unto the Throne of Grace" for this rest and for this strength to hold fast. Whatever the need may be, whatever may be the grace or mercy that we need, it is a great thing to be enabled to come boldly to the mercy-seat, and to open the mouth wide as we read in the Psalms. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." This would be a wonderful Prayer-meeting, a sacred moment, a season of worship, if we could pour out our hearts before Him and receive in our souls that rest. It would be a strength to sustain us in every time of need. May the Lord grant it to us.

Amen.

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