

REST
NO. 866

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“For we which have believed do enter into rest.”
Hebrews 4:3

REST! A dainty word indeed! Too rich a syllable for this unstable earth! Is it not a stray word from the language of the celestials? REST! Is it obtainable? Is it possible? Can there ever be rest for the race who were driven out of Paradise, to till the ground whence they were taken and to eat bread in the sweat of their face? Rest! Is it possible for a soul polluted with sin, tossed to and fro with inward lusts, and agitated with outward temptations?

Is not man like the dove aforesaid sent forth from the ark, when towards evening it longed for a rest for the sole of its feet, but found none? Is it not the fate of man's soul to use her wings as long as they will last her. Forever flitting to and fro in vain pursuit of rest. Seeing far and wide mocking wastes of disappointments, but never reaching a place of repose for her flagging pinions?

How apt was the simile of the old Saxon chieftain, when he compared the unenlightened soul to the bird which flew in at the open windows of the banquet hall, was scared by the uproarious shouts of boisterous warriors around the fire, and passed out again by another window into the cold and the darkness.

Our spirit, attracted by the tempting glare, darts into the halls of pleasure, but soon is frightened and alarmed by the rough voice of conscience and the demands of insatiable passions, and away it flies from the momentary gleam of pleasure and dream of happiness, into the thick darkness of discontent and the snow storm of remorse.

Man, without God, is like the mariner in the story, condemned to sail on forever, and never to find a haven. He is the real Wandering Jew, immortal in his restlessness. Like the evil spirit, man by nature walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Of our race by nature it might almost be said as of our Redeemer, varying but a little His words, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the *soul of man* hath not where to lay *its* head.”

I speak of many this morning to whom this has been exceedingly true from their boyhood onward. They have been vainly hoping for enduring contentment and striving after solid satisfaction. Piloted first in one direction and soon in the opposite, they have compassed the whole world and investigated all pursuits, but as yet in vain.

I see you today weary and disquieted, like galley-slaves chained to the oar, and I mark the fears which reveal themselves in your countenances, for the whip of the taskmaster is sounding in your ears. Long have you tugged the oar of ambition, or of the lust of pleasure, or of avarice, or of care.

But rest a moment, I pray you, and listen to the witness of those who declare to you that escape from bondage is possible, and that rest is to be found even now. As your galley floats along on the stream of the Sabbath, and your toil is a little while suspended, hear you the sweet song of those redeemed by the blood of Jesus—for they sing of rest, even of rest this side the grave.

Listen for awhile, and mayhap you will discover how they found their rest and learn how you may find it too. What if your chains should be broken today, and your labors should be ended, and you should enter into perfect peace! If so, it will be the gladdest Sabbath that your soul ever knew. And others shall share in the gladness, for we who may be privileged to help you shall participate in your joy,

and even spirits before the throne of God shall rejoice when they hear that another weary one has found rest in Christ Jesus.

In handling our text, we shall first try to describe *the rest of the Christian*. We shall, secondly, mention *how he obtained it*. Thirdly, we shall enumerate *the grounds upon which that rest is settled*. And then we shall say a few words by way of practical reflection.

I. First, it appears from the text that even now persons of a certain character enjoy rest. Of the NATURE OF THIS REST we are to speak.

It is not a rest merely to hear of, to speak of, and to desire—but a rest into which believers have entered. They have passed into it and are in actual enjoyment of it today. “We who have believed do enter into rest.” That rest is pictured in some degree by *its types*.

Canaan was a representation of the rest of believers. By some it has been thought to picture heaven, and it may be so used without violence. But remember that in heaven there are no Hivites or Jebusites to be driven out, while in the rest which God gives to His people here on earth, there yet remain struggles with inbred sins, and uprising corruptions which must be dethroned and destroyed. *Canaan* is a fair type of the rest which belongs to the believer this side the grave.

Now what a sweet rest *Canaan* must have been to the tribes after forty years’ pilgrimage! In the howling wilderness they wandered in a solitary way amid discomforts which only desert wanderers can imagine. Forever were they on the move. The tents which were pitched but yesterday must be struck today, for the trumpets are sounding, and the cloudy pillar is leading the way.

What packing and unpacking, what harnessing and unharnessing. What marches through clouds of dust and over unyielding beds of sand. What variations of temperature, from the heat of the burning desert by day to its chilliness at night. What discomforts of constant travel and frequent warfare.

In those forty years, with all the mercy which sustained them, with all the manna which dropped from heaven, and the crystal stream which followed them from the smitten rock, they were men of weary foot, and they must have longed for green fields and cities which have foundations. They must have pined for the time when they could, every man, sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and possess his lot in the land flowing with milk and honey.

Such is the Christian’s rest. He was led out by Moses, the law—out of the Egypt of sin into the wilderness of conviction and seeking after God. And now Jesus, the true Joshua, has led him into perfect acceptance and peace. And since the discomforts of conviction and the troubles of unpardoned sin are over, he sits down under the vine and fig tree of the gracious promise and rejoices in Christ Jesus. Think, then, of *Canaan* as a type of the peace which God’s people at this present time by faith enjoy.

So also is *the Sabbath*. That is a blessed standing ordinance, reminding believers of their delightful privileges. Work during the six days, for it is your duty—“six days shalt thou labor”—but on the Sabbath enjoy perfect rest, both in body and in soul. Yet look to the higher meaning of the Sabbath and learn to cease from your own works. If you were to be saved by works, you must work without a moment’s pause, for you could never complete the toil, since absolute perfection would be demanded.

But when you come to Christ, your works are finished. There is no hewing of wood nor drawing of water. There is no keeping of commandments with a view to merit, no toilsome tugging at ceremonials and ordinances with a view to acceptance. “It is finished” is the silver bell that rings your soul into a marriage of peace and joy in Christ Jesus.

Take care, believer, that you live in a perpetual Sabbath of rest in the finished work of your ascended Lord. Remember that your legal righteousness is complete. You have ceased from your own works as God did from His, and let none provoke you to go back to the old bondage of the law, but stand you fast in the blessed liberty of grace, rejoicing in the perfect work of your Substitute and Surety.

What a wonderful type of the Christian’s rest *the Sabbatic year* would have been if the Jews had possessed faith enough to keep it! Once in seven years they were not to plough the ground nor prune the vines, nor do aught of agricultural labor. They were to eat during the whole year that which grew of itself. And I suppose there would have been such an abundance in the sixth year that they would have

been able to live on the seventh without toil. We have heard, but only heard, of a halcyon period in store for us in which we are to be untaxed by our Government. May we live to see it!

But here was a period in which men were to live without toil during a whole twelve months, and so would be able to consecrate their entire time to the worship of their gracious God with joy and thankfulness. That year was the type of the Christian's life in the matter of his salvation. So he ought to live, rejoicing in his God, resting from all servile labors, his soul fed upon the spontaneous bounty of heaven, and his heart rejoicing in the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus.

If the types may help us to a guess at the peace of the Christian, we may, perhaps, come at it a little more clearly and practically by remembering *the oppositions to peace which in the believer are removed*. Can there ever be rest to a heart which has sinned? Answer, yes. The believer rests from the guilt of *sin* because he has seen his sins laid upon Christ, his scapegoat, and knowing well that nothing can be in two places at one time, he concludes that if sin were laid on Christ, it is not on him.

And thus he rejoices in his own deliverance from sin, through its having been imputed to his glorious Substitute. The believer in Christ Jesus sees sin effectually punished in Christ Jesus, and knowing that justice can never demand two penalties for the same crime, or two payments for the same debt, he rests perfectly at peace with regard to his past sins. He has, in the person of his Surety, endured the hell that was due on the account of transgressions. Christ, by suffering in his stead, has answered all the demands of justice, and the believer's heart is perfectly at rest.

How does he deal with his *inbred sins* and tendencies to evil? Can a man rest while those are within him? Yes, he rests even though those are struggling within him for the mastery, because there is a new life within him which holds them by the throat and keeps them under foot. Though his corruptions strive and wrestle, yet while the saint firmly believes in Christ, he knows that the strugglings of his sins are but a gasp for life, and that the weapons of victorious grace will slay them all, and end the strife forever.

He is assured that Christ has broken the dragon's head, and that sin was crucified with Christ, and therefore he regards his inward lusts as being dying malefactors. And though they may show some threatening signs of strength, yet he sees the nails in their hands, and in their feet, and knows that ere long death will follow upon crucifixion.

But has the Christian no *care*? Other men are sorely beset with perplexing anxieties—have believers none of these? The rich find cares in their wealth—how shall they increase it! How shall they retain it! The poor have cares in their scant and poverty—how shall they make ends meet and provide things honest in the sight of men!

Ay, but in this matter, the believer has learned to cast his care on Him who cares for him. He has heard the voice which says, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God." "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Oh! but what rest it gives to the soul when it feels that God appoints everything and that providence is not for us to arrange, but is all settled and determined by infinite wisdom. I thank God that I am not the pilot of my own destiny, called to peer anxiously into the storm and murky darkness, and to thread with awful fear the narrow channel between rocks and quicksand. I have taken a pilot on board, whose infallible wisdom forbids an error. Let my soul go sweetly to her rest in full assurance that all is ordered rightly where God commands all things.

But has not the Christian his *troubles and temptations*? Is he not sometimes vexed with bodily pain? Does he not resort to the grave with many tears over departed ones? Has he not a checkered life like others? Ah! yes, he has no exemption from the war of sorrow, but he knows that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.

He sees no divine anger in his losses and fears no wrath from God in his chastisements. He believes that mercy mixes all his cups. That goodness and truth like a silver thread runs through the texture of his outer life. It is while he believes that he thus rests. And mark you, it is only while he believes, and in

proportion as he believes, that he enters into rest. If his faith be strong enough, not a wave of trouble shall roll across his spirit, though all God's waves and billows may go over his head.

"Still," says one, "has not the Christian *service* to perform? How then can it be said that he has rest?" I know that he has service, but in this service he does rest, like birds of which I have heard that sleep upon the wing. It is rest to labor for the Lord Jesus. A believing soul is never more at ease than when she is putting forth her full strength in the service of God. I suppose it is no toil to larks to sing as they mount, and certainly it is no trouble to Christians to pour forth a holy life, which is their soul's song.

Christian service is so the outflow of the believer's inner nature, the spontaneous outburst of indwelling grace, that though it may be toil to the lip and toil to the brain, it is perfect rest to the spirit. This I know—there is no unrest I feel more heavily than that of not being at work for my Lord. And if I am made to stay at home by sickness or any other cause, and may not serve my Master, it is no rest to me. I gather, then, that it is possible to be still but not to rest. And certainly possible to be indefatigable in service and to be resting all the while.

"Still," adds one, "does the Christian who believes ever rest in the matter of the approach of *death*? He must die as other men, however favored of heaven!" Yes, and this is one of the points in which his rest is exceedingly complete, for he comes to look at death not only as no enemy, but as a friend, and he counts on his departure even as a thing to be desired. What is there here that he should wait? What is there upon earth that should detain an immortal spirit? To depart and to be with Christ, is, to him, far better.

Do not the groans and dying strife, the breaking up of the bodily system, and the pains and anguish which generally precede death—do not these break the Christian's rest? I tell you no. When faith is steadfast, he looks at these discomforts connected with the removal of his earthly tabernacle as being appointed of his Father, and he resigns himself to them, expecting to receive, with the increase of his bodily pain, an increase of inward consolation. Reckoning that if he loses the silver of bodily strength, and gets the gold of heavenly experience, he shall be a great gainer. Boldly he laughs at death and rejoices in the thought of departure, that he may be with Christ eternally.

In a word, brethren, the rest of the believer, while his faith is sustained by the Spirit of God, is such a one as no stranger intermeddles with. Such as the sinner can hear of with the ear, but cannot imagine in his heart. Sinner, you have had wealth lavished on you. You have enjoyed growing prosperity. You have been young and merry. You have mixed with company who laugh by day, and dance far into the night, but you do not know, you cannot even guess, what our rest is who have taken Jesus Christ to be our Savior, God to be our Father, and the Holy Ghost to be our Comforter.

I wish you did know, for I believe that if you once understood the rest of the believer's life, you would give up all that this world calls good and great without one lingering look, for the sake of the solid joy and lasting treasure which only Zion's children know.

Still, to give you a complete idea, as far as possibly may be, of the rest which belongs to believers, I would notice that some conception of this rest may be gathered from *the graces which a true faith begets* and fosters in the Christian mind. After all, a man makes his own condition. It is not the dungeon or the palace that can make misery or happiness. We carry palaces and dungeons within ourselves, according to the constitution of our natures.

Now, faith makes a man *heavenly in mind*. It makes him care more for the world to come than for that which now is. It makes the invisible precious to him and the visible comparatively contemptible. Do you not see, therefore, what rest a true faith gives us, amidst the distresses of this mortal life? You are very poor, but if you set small store by riches, poverty will not distress you. If you have learned to consider spiritual things as the better part, you will not pine because the waters of the nether springs are scant.

Have you never heard of the Persian King who gave his various counselors different gifts? To one he gave a golden goblet, but to another a kiss. Whereupon all the counselors of the court were envious of

the man who had the kiss, and they counted the goblets of gold, and jewels, and caskets of silver, to be less than nothing as compared with that familiar token of royal favor.

O poor but favored saints, you will never envy those who quaff golden cups of fortune if you obtain the kiss from Jesus' mouth. For you know that His love is better than all the world beside, and the enjoyment of it will yield you the richest rest. How can you feel the miseries of envy when you possess in Christ the best of all portions? Who wants cisterns by the river? Who cries for pebbles when he possesses pearls?

The grace of faith, moreover, works in us *resignation*. He who fully trusts his God becomes perfectly resigned to His Father's will. He knows that all God's dealings must be right, since the Lord is much too wise to err, and much too full of loving-kindness to deal harshly with His people. This resignation is another source of rest to the spirit.

The habit of resignation is the root of peace. A godly child had a ring given him by his mother, and he greatly prized it, but on a sudden he unhappily lost his ring and he cried bitterly. Recollecting himself, he stepped aside and prayed—after which his sister laughingly said to him, “Brother, what is the good of praying about a ring? Will praying bring back your ring?” “No,” said he, “sister, perhaps not, but praying has done this for me, it has made me quite willing to do without the ring if it is God's will, and is not that almost as good as having it?”

Thus faith quiets us by resignation, as a babe is hushed in his mother's bosom. Faith makes us quite willing to do without the mercy which once we prized. And when the heart is content to be without the outward blessing, it is as happy as it would be with it, for it is at rest. Besides, faith works humility. Dependence upon the merit of Christ and a sense of pardoned sin, work in us a low esteem of our own merits and rights. Then we do not strive after mastery.

If others think ill of us, it does not break our heart, for we say, “If they knew me, they might think still worse of me.” If some do not respect us as we deserve, we make small account of that, for we think it a little matter for such poor worms as we are to be respected or the reverse. And if there be some who evil entreat us, we take it joyfully, because we never thought ourselves worthy to be exempted from reproach. Surely we were sent here on purpose that we might take part with the great Head of the church by suffering for the promotion of the divine purposes. A humble heart is fitted to be filled with rest.

Faith furthermore promotes *unselfishness* by kindling worthier affections. And so much is this for our peace, that it is most true that were a man perfectly unselfish, it would be impossible for him to be disturbed with discontent. All our unrest lies at the root of self. If a man could be perfectly content to be anything that God would have him be, and have no desires except for God's glory, he could never be banished, for all places would be alike to him. He could never be poor, for in every condition he would have what his heart desired.

Brethren and sisters, I cannot continue this long catalog, but wherever faith rules, it brings with it a refining fire which, as it burns up our corruptions, also stays the raging of our passions, and creates a peace of God which passes all understanding, warranting the apostle's declaration that, “We who have believed do enter into rest.”

Faith tones us down into little children. It casts our heart in a fresh mold. It brings us into harmony with the universe, and we who were out of tune with God and nature are once more reconciled to the Divine One, His purposes, and providences. All goes well with the man who trusts in God—the beasts of the field are at peace with him and the stones of the field have made a league with him. All must be right when the heart is right, and the heart is right when faith rejoicingly reconciles the soul to God through the death of Jesus Christ.

Thus I have, as best I am able, described the Christian's rest. I only hope—to use John Bunyan's language—that many of your mouths are a-watering to get a personal share in this rest.

II. The second point to consider is, HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN OBTAIN THIS REST?—“We *which have believed.*”

Do notice this, that the way in which the believer comes to his rest is entirely through belief or trust. How I love to think of this word! If the apostle had said, “We who have been eminently consecrated do enter into rest,” I could have wept over the text with shame and dismay. If he had said, “We that have been mightily useful, and earnest, and indefatigable in service—we do enter into rest,” I should have looked at it very wistfully, and have said, “I am afraid I shall never reach it.”

But “We which have believed.” Why, that will suit thousands here. It will suit some of you who have been mourning all week because you cannot be what you want to be, because you cannot serve God as you would like to do. “We which have believed.” So then the gate of the fold of rest, the pearly doorway into the New Jerusalem is simply belief in the Lord Jesus. What? Nothing else but believing? I see nothing else in the text—nothing but believing.

And what is this believing? Why it is a simple trust—it is a trusting upon Christ as God’s appointed Savior. It is trusting the Father and believing in His infinite love to us. It is trusting the Holy Ghost and giving up ourselves to the sway of His divine indwelling. Trusting brings rest. This is a simple truth, and yet it is a truth we need to remember, consider, and be assured upon.

Peace does not come to the believer through his works. He ought to have works—he must have them if he has the life of grace within his heart. He should attend to baptism, to the Lord’s supper, and to all Christian ordinances, but he does not get rest through these. The rest comes through his faith, not through the ordinances.

“Means of grace,” men call those ordinances, and some have gone to great lengths as to what comes to us through sacraments—but I say most boldly, that the apostle goes to greater lengths in another direction, namely, in neglecting to say anything in such a case as this about baptism or the Lord’s supper, and in laying all our rest at the door of believing.

“We that have believed.” He is of the same mind as our Lord Himself, when He declares that whosoever believes on the Son has everlasting life, as if the only essential thing were this believing, and where this was, all the privileges of the covenant were to be enjoyed.

Dearly beloved, we ought to pant after sanctification. It should be the ambition of our spirits to be useful—we ought to be crying and sighing everyday after conformity to Christ. But recollect, it is neither in our sanctification, nor in our usefulness, nor in our conformity that we find our rest—our rest comes to us through believing in Jesus Christ. The apostle indirectly tells us in these words, that those who believe in Christ Jesus enter into rest, notwithstanding anything and everything beside.

“We which have believed,” says he, “do enter into rest.” What, Paul, have you no corruptions? “Alas!” cries he, “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” Yet he entered into rest. What, Paul, have you no doubts? Hear him—“I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I had preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Had he no vexing troubles? He answers, “Without were fightings, and within were fears.” And yet O apostle, did you enter into rest? Ay, by believing. But had you no sins, Paul? Yes, verily, he confesses himself the chief of sinners, but believing made him enter into rest.

Mark you the vicissitudes of the apostle’s experience were far greater than ours. As his mind was more capacious than ours, and his outward experience more varied, his trials were more and heavier than ordinary. A night and a day had he been in the deep, yet believing, he did enter into rest. With his feet fast in the stocks in the jail of Phillipi, stoned by infuriated mobs, and before Nero the lion at Rome, in all kinds of dangers and difficulties, surrounded by imminent perils by night and by day, he was ever in afflictions, and yet he declares that, having believed, he did enter into rest, a rest which no outward circumstances could disturb. Oh, blessed lesson!

My soul, ask for grace to learn by experience the blessed fact that faith altogether by itself, and alone can give you rest. When the pillars of heaven tremble, and the cornerstone of the earth is removed, faith can make the soul steadfast and keep it confident.

The apostle seems to intimate in the words before us, that the entering into rest, while it depends on nothing else but believing, does depend on that. It is, “We which have believed do enter into rest.” Then

why do not some professed Christians have rest? Why do not we ourselves have rest at all times? Answer—because faith is not always in vigorous exercise, and though the possession of a weak, but genuine faith brings to a Christian unailing and unchanging security, yet it brings not to him an abiding rest.

Our faith must take God at His Word or it cannot taste the sweetness of His abounding peace. The child that cannot trust its parent, cannot expect to have the freedom from care which is childhood's dear inheritance. But the more fully we can rest upon our Father's promise, the more we can feel that it is not for us to inquire how He can do this, nor how He can do that, nor when He will deliver us, but can altogether leave everything with Him, and lean on Him alone without a second helper. Then it is that our rest becomes profound and undisturbed.

O you who are in the church and yet cannot rest as you would wish, ask the Lord to increase your faith. O you who do trust Him, but are often staggered, go again to the cross-foot and look to Him who suffered there. Look again to the precious sin-atonement blood. Look up once more into the great Father's face who accepts those that trust in Jesus and you shall yet have the perfect rest which God gives only to believers.

I cannot readily tear myself away from this point. My soul hovers about it and lingers lovingly on it, because I am so anxious that you all should win this rest and enjoy it today. I know that some of you are complaining of what you do or do not feel—but this is not to the point. My message, as contained in the text, proclaims no blessing to feeling, but to believing.

Oh, can you not trust the Son of God to save you? Can you not believe the promise which is so freely given to all who will but trust in Him? Have done, I pray you, with raking the kennel of your heart in search of golden consolations. Go to Christ—you shall get all your soul wants in Him.

Oh! it may be you are saying, "I have not the rest I used to have. I will read the Bible more, and I will pray more, and I will go to a place of worship more often," and so on. All which is right, but none of these things will bring you rest. Rest for a soul is found in Jesus. The dove never found rest till she came to the ark—nor will you till you come back again to Christ. O dear heart, all the sacraments in the world cannot give you rest, nor can all the preachers that ever spoke, minister rest to your weary spirit.

Do you come now with nought to trust in of your own. Come to the infinite mercy of God as treasured up in the once-pierced heart of the Well-beloved, and He will give you rest. O come, poor fluttered dove, fly into Jesus' bosom, because you cannot help it. Driven by stress of weather, put in to this port of peace.

Believe me, Jesus cannot reject you. It is impossible. Believe me, if you trust Him, you shall have rest today—shall have the same rest as those who have been fifty years His servants, rest through the blood of the atonement, "which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

III. So now the last point, which is this—what is THE GROUND AND REASON OF A CHRISTIAN'S REST?

It is a dreadful thing to be at rest in extreme peril, lulled by false security. It is perilous to sleep in a house built on a foundation of sand, when the floods are out and the winds are about to sweep all away. It is horrible to be at peace in a condemned cell, when already the scaffold has been put up and the hour of execution is hastening on! Such peace may God preserve us from.

But the believer has good reason for being at peace, and why? He has these reasons, amongst others. He trusts to be saved by a way which God has appointed. It is God's ordinance that Jesus Christ should be the propitiation for sin, and He has solemnly declared that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish.

Now, whether or not a soul believing in Christ can perish, if the devil tells me he can, I am prepared to risk it, for God's way of appointment, if I accept it, takes all responsibility off of me. If I perish, God's honor is injured as well as my soul. But I know that God will stand to His appointment. He gave Christ for my salvation. I feel there is no risk in my resting on Him. I do rest on Him, and if God be true, my soul is safe. Therefore I am perfectly at rest.

Next, the believer rests in the person of Jesus. “Why,” says he, “He that I commend my soul unto is no other than God Himself, and though born of a virgin as to His manhood, yet is He very God of very God, most certainly divine. Therefore,

*‘I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I’ve committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour.’”*

Here is a firm rock to rest on. What better person can we depend upon than Jesus, the Son of God?

The believer, moreover, knows that all things which were necessary to save him and all the elect are already performed. The debts which were due on our account have been paid by our Surety. The believer is not afraid, then, of being sued in the Court of King’s Bench and cast into prison to pay the uttermost farthing, because every penny has been paid.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was God’s receipt for the sin which had been laid on the Surety. “He rose again for our justification.” And the Christian says, “Though my sins be as the sands on the seashore, yet all that was due for sin was laid on Christ, and therefore, no penalty can be laid on me.” This is good ground for peace, is it not?

Then, moreover, the believer says, “He who died for me ever lives. He rose again. The great One who undertook my cause is not dead and buried. I have not lost my Friend. He lives at the right hand of God and makes intercession for me. Strong to deliver and mighty to save, He is ever ready to manifest His power towards His people. Why, then, should I be disturbed? Since Christ lives, I must live also.”

The believer, moreover, knows that the Lord has entered into an everlasting covenant with him, and he rests upon the veracity and faithfulness of God that every covenant promise shall be fulfilled. Surely God’s truth is good ground for a soul to rest on. There can be no fear when here is our mainstay and refuge. Though the pillars of the earth be removed, and all the wheels of nature break, there can be no fear that the Eternal Himself should lie. If the foundations of divine veracity were removed, indeed the righteous would be lost, but no such calamity can happen. Believers do well to rest on a ground as safe as this.

“Ah, well,” says one, “shall *I* ever have such ground for comfort as that?” Poor soul, you may have. But you can have no ground for comfort at all until you do comply with the divine command to believe in Jesus. For you, as unbelievers, there is no rest. There cannot be any. You may be what you like, and do what you choose, and try what you please, but so long as you refuse the divine way of salvation, rest is not possible for you.

If you will today throw down your self-will, and give up the obstinacy of your unbelief, and trust in the incarnate God who on the bloody tree poured out His heart’s blood, you shall have forgiveness and acceptance, and then the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and your peace shall be deep and profound—the beginning of the peace of heaven. A peace which shall go on widening and deepening through this mortal life as you know more of Christ, and become more like Him—a peace which shall expand into the ocean of eternal joy. All through believing! All through trusting!

Nothing is said of the sinnership of the truster, nothing about the greatness or littleness of his sins, nothing about the softness or tenderness of his heart, nothing about his fitness or unfitness, but it is said only that he believes! “*We* which have believed,” whoever we may be, if we have but trusted, if we have taken God at His Word and rested on it—we do enter, we do *now* enter into and enjoy a most divine and blessed rest.

In conclusion, there are three practical words.

The first is to *the man who never has rested*. It is, *try God’s way of rest*. How I pity you who have not entered the rest of God! You are so morally good, so amiable, so truly loveable, you adorn the

households in which you move, but for lack of one thing you are not happy, and you never can be till you get that one thing. Oh, I wish you had it! I wish you had it today!

I do remember well when I first found rest, I did not think it was so simple a matter. I could not believe it and I fear I should not have believed it till now if the Holy Ghost had not enlightened me. I could not believe that rest came simply by trusting. I used to say, "What! only believe!" But now I have found out that the only believing is one of the richest things in the world—for it brings ten thousand other things with it. It brings with it seven other spirits as blessed as itself when it enters in and dwells in the human heart.

This morning the truth is certain, if you can believe, all things are possible to you. If you can now trust in Him who came to be a man to save men, and who suffered that men might not suffer, and who is risen and gone up to heaven, and is coming again a second time to judge the world, if you can put your soul into His hands, it will be quite safe.

He cannot lose it and He will not. O that you would confide in Jesus this morning, for then you would become another witness to the rest which God's people enjoy. O may it be so at once! We desire to see God's kingdom come. We want Christ to see of the travail of His soul and we hope that you are one of those who shall forever illustrate His mighty love. Yield your heart now. Yield to the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit who is breathing upon you now. Trust and you shall rest.

The next word is *to those of you who once did rest, but do not now*. You backslider, this is your word—*return unto your rest*. You never will find rest out of Christ—especially you. An ungodly man does, after a certain sort, rest in sin. For a time he is satisfied with its gaieties, and its frivolities appear to delight him, as husks satisfy swine, but *you* cannot ever have such rest as this. If you are a child of God, you will never be easy in sin.

As Rutherford would say, "If you have once eaten the white bread of heaven, your mouth is out of taste for the brown bannocks of earth." You cannot be content as a swine, after having once associated with angels. If Christ has given you heavenly emotions and desires, you must go back to Him to have them satisfied, for away from Him your state is present misery, and will wax worse and worse.

Return, return, O backslider, at once! O that I could make my voice a silver trumpet to you this morning, and that you could hear it as the proclamation of jubilee, bidding you return to your inheritance. What fruit have you had in all your sins since you have wandered from your first husband? What joy, what happiness have you known? Oh, it has been all disappointment, vexation, delusion!

Come back! Come back! Come back! The mercy seat is still open. The heart of Jesus beats lovingly towards you still. The grace of God waits for you still. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you." "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from them."

Lastly, to *you who are at rest now*. *Endeavor to keep it*. And the way to keep it is the way you first gained it. You obtained it by believing—keep it by believing. Believe in the promise of grace in the teeth of your sins and corruptions. It is little or no faith to trust Christ when you feel your graces growing and your lusts weakening, but oh! it is faith when you feel burdened, and cast down with a sense of sin, still to say, "I know that Jesus came not to save the righteous, but sinners. I know He came not to save men from some slight disease of sin, but He is a physician able to grapple with the most virulent and mortal of diseases.

"I, therefore, confide in Him without a doubt, and if I were a bigger sinner than I am, I would still trust Him. If my spots were more scarlet than they are, I would still believe that the crimson fount could make me white as snow. I will still come to Him—not with a staggering faith which would try to make sin little in order to believe it possible that He could take it away, but with a faith which knows sin to be great beyond conception, and yet believes that the Savior is greater still, and the merit of His blood more potent than the demerit of human transgression."

O believer, abide always at the cross, and never go away from it. Let no advancements in grace make you say, "Excelsior" to the cross, for there is no higher than Calvary. Your wisdom is to remain a

sinner washed with blood at the cross-foot, for you build wretched rubbish when you build above the cross.

If you have ever been on the top of Snowdon or the Righi, you will have seen little platforms and heaps piled up for tourists to stand on. Now these may be blown over, but it is not the mountain that moves—it is only those trumpery platforms. So if you build up your little rickety experiences above the genuine work of Christ, and they come tumbling down, do not wonder at it.

On the contrary, be rather glad of it than not. To lie down on what Christ has done is safest and best.

*“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”*

“Having nothing, yet possessing all things.” Guilty in myself, but accepted in the Beloved. Naked, poor, miserable, and wretched to the last degree, as I am in myself considered, yet in Christ Jesus I am dear to God, as dear as if I had never sinned. I am one with Jesus, and heir with Him to all the inheritance of God. And shortly I shall be with Jesus where He is at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.

The Lord bless you with such a faith, for Jesus’ sake, Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
HEBREWS 3 AND PSALM 62**

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.