

“REST IN THE LORD”
NO. 1333

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“Rest in the Lord.”
Psalm 37:7.

THE occurrence of our text in the psalm before us is an instance of the great rule that the Lord does nothing by halves. In this priceless psalm, the Lord found His servant in the first verse liable to fretfulness and envy, and He exhorted him to cease from fretting. Then, in verse three, He taught him to trust. In verse four, He led him on to delight. In verses five and six, He conducted him into a peaceful committing of his way unto God and He did not stay the operation of His grace till He had perfected that which concerned him and brought him up to the elevated point of our text, “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.” God does not merely cure the evil in us, but He confers unspeakable good. He takes away the disfiguring wound, but He imparts also comeliness and beauty. If any of you this morning are in a low state of grace, so that you have even fallen into fretfulness at the prosperity of the ungodly, do not cast away all hope, for the grace of God abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence and He will restore your soul. Remember how David said, in the seventy-third Psalm, “I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” “So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless, I am continually with You: you have held me by my right hand.” The Lord knows how to bring His people again from Bashan, yes, and to uplift them like Jonah from the depths of the sea, and He can bring you, this day by the operation of His grace upward from doubt to assurance, from fretfulness to rest.

Rest is a blessing which properly belongs to the people of God, although they do not enjoy it one tenth as much as they might. Under the Old Testament dispensation, there was considerable provision made for rest. Typically, the chosen nation was shown that one great end of the visitation of the Lord was to give His people rest, for on the seventh day they rested and did no manner of work. Yes more, in the seventh year they rested according to the divine precept. “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.” When they were obedient to the Lord’s command, they thus enjoyed a whole year of rest, and were no losers by it, for no doubt the seventh fallow year so benefited the land that it brought forth all the more fruit during the other six, so that there was none the less store in their barns. Over and above this, once in fifty years, when the seventh year came round, they carried out still further the Sabbatic idea and the Jubilee Year was a time of peculiar and emphatic rest and festival. For thus had the Lord commanded. “A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of your vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.” So that very prominently, even in that somewhat servile and yoke-bearing dispensation, there was brought before the mind of the Israelite the privilege of rest, and those who possessed the inner sight, as Moses did, realized the promise, “My Spirit shall go with you and I will give you rest.” Indeed, Canaan itself was intended to be the type of rest—the land that flows with milk and honey, the land of brooks and valleys, the land that the Lord your God thinks on, the land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year, was meant to be a place where every man should rest under his own vine and fig tree, and look for a yet deeper rest in God. Had they known it, in giving them Canaan, Joshua had given them a fair picture of rest. They did not see through the type so as fully to understand its significance, yet nevertheless, there it was. O Christian men and women, you also miss much of your rest. You have too much of fretfulness, too much of care, too much that is servile. The land does not keep her Sabbaths as she should, neither does your soul rest as it might, and as for jubilees, how very scarce they are, whereas, if

Christians lived near to God and enjoyed the peace which Jesus gives, they might keep Jubilee every year and Sabbath every day. The Lord grant that we may have power to enjoy His rest and that it may never be said of us, "They could not enter in because of unbelief."

Brethren, the Lord, as if to show us that He would have us rest, has been pleased to speak of resting Himself. It is inconceivable that He should be fatigued. It were profanity to suppose that He who faints not, neither is weary, and of whose understanding there is no searching, can ever be in a condition to need rest, and yet He did rest, for when He had finished all the works of His hands in the six days of creation, the Lord "rested on the seventh day and sanctified it." When afterwards that rest was broken because His works were marred, we find Him further on smelling a "sweet savor of rest" in the sacrifice which was offered unto Him by Noah, whose very name was rest. These two facts are highly instructive and teach us that God rests in a perfect work and that when that work is marred, the Lord rests in a perfect sacrifice, even in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has a rest there and He speaks of our "entering His rest" as it is written, "They shall not enter into My rest." There is a rest of God, then, and there remains a rest unto the people of God, and of that rest, not in its highest development in heaven, but in its present enjoyment on earth, we are about to speak.

"Rest in the Lord." First, dear brethren, let us consider the steps to this royal chamber of repose. Secondly, let us meditate upon the rest which is enjoyed in that quiet chamber, and then, thirdly, let us look at that sumptuous chamber, itself. As the result and issue of it all, may the Holy Spirit sweetly lead us into quietness and peace, even as of old it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest."

I. First, then, let us consider certain STEPS TO THIS ROYAL CHAMBER OF REST. How are we to reach this place of sacred repose? The steps are in the psalm before us. The first is, "Fret not yourself." You are out in the fields among the wild beasts—cease to hunt them. You are among those who toil in bondage, suffering all the brunt of ill weathers and hard seasons—come away from them. Come within doors, into your Father's house. By the help of the divine Spirit, leave the green bay trees which have cast their shadow upon you and enter into the sanctuary. No longer be as the carnal who envy one another. So long as you are out there among those who lust after evil things and fret against the Lord's providence, you cannot rest. While you are agitating yourself to gain what other men lust after and to enjoy what other men take pleasure in, you are missing the peculiar privileges of the children of God. While your spirit is running with worldlings in the race and wrestling with them in the battle, you cannot enjoy the peace which Jesus left as a legacy to His disciples. Come away then, for the first step to rest is, "Fret not yourself." The griefs which make the ungodly pine are not for you, for the objects which they seek are not your objects. The losses which make them despond must not make you disconsolate, for their treasure is not your treasure. Come away from them and stop admiring their transient felicity and lamenting your present distress. Have you been envying transgressors? Count yourself to have been foolish and ignorant in so doing, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. Rise above the things which are seen, for they are temporal and spurn the things which make the flesh smart, for this light affliction is but for a moment. Let not the world weigh you down, for you are bound, as an heir of heaven, to tread the world beneath your feet—and all its honors you are called upon to despise, and in order that your soul should not lust after its dainties, come away unto your God and no longer fret yourself.

When you have thus come out of the field and have arrived at the palace of love, the first staircase is described as trust and do. Read the third verse, "Trust in the Lord and do good." You believe in the Lord's love, prove your confidence by committing yourself to the keeping of Him who loves you. You believe in the atonement of Jesus, fly for cleansing to the blood which was shed for you. You believe in the glory of your risen Lord, commit all your future to Him with whom you are one day to sit upon the throne. As for all your trials, come now and believe in God concerning them. Do not let anything make you mistrust or distrust your God. Know that He is God and "His mercy endures forever," and trust in Him forever. But let this faith be practical.

"Trust in the Lord and do good." A dead faith will bring you but poor comfort. Yours must be a faith which can do as well as receive. It is through the exercise of faith that comfort comes to the heart, even as the exercise of our limbs warms our bodily frame. Do good even if you suffer for it and you shall partake in the joy of your Lord—

*“Commit your way to God,
The weight which makes you faint.
World’s are to Him no load.
To Him breathe your complaint.
He who for winds and clouds
Makes a pathway free,
Through wastes, or hostile crowds
Will make a way for thee.”*

When you have learned to trust and to do, you will have ascended a noble staircase of the royal palace and where does it land you? It lands you in the king’s dining room, where it is written, “Verily you shall be fed.” Observe the promise—if you have a living, active faith you shall be provided for. Your bodily wants as they come shall be relieved. Your mental wants also shall be satisfied, and as for the vast demands of your spirit, God all-sufficient shall supply them all, “So shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.” It will be a happy circumstance, dear brethren, if you can come up the first staircase this morning, leaving the fields, leaving the elder brethren out there who complain concerning the many years of service in which their Father has never given them a kid, that they might make merry with their friends, and rejoicing to do the will of the Lord out of motives of love. Let the sinner and the grumbler alone and go up those stairs of active faith and sit down where a feast is spread, even a feast of fat things full of marrow and of wines on the lees well-refined.

We must ascend somewhat higher and climb the next staircase which is marked, Delight and Desire. “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Think what a good God you have, yes, what a blessed God He is. Remember how good He has been to you in the past. Think of the richness of His Word, the sureness of His promise, the tenderness of His love, and the power of His arm till your soul shall say, “Whatever I have not, I have my God. Whatever is unsatisfactory, He satisfies me, and whatever grieves me to think it is so unfit for me, nothing grieves me in my God. I would not have Him changed, nor have Him change in any respect. He is a sea of blessedness in which my soul does swim.” When you have delighted, begin to desire. Open your mouth wide and the Lord will fill it. Enlarge your petitions and He will grant them to you. Desire more grace, more holiness, more love, more knowledge of Christ, more heaven below, and all these shall come at your call. Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.

See, now, we have ascended beyond the dining room and mounted to the royal treasury. We have entered the king’s armory. Yes, we have come into the king’s withdrawing room where He listens to the desires of His suitors and enters into fellowship with them and bids them delight in Him. Here He bids you open your heart and pour forth your secret longings, for He will lavish upon you the gifts of His love and fill you with all His fullness. It will be a great joy for you today if you have now climbed from the low marshy lands of fretting into the upper chamber of delighting in the Lord.

But you are not up to the royal rest chamber yet. You must now climb another stair marked, Commit your way and trust. “Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him.” Concerning that part of your way which you understand and have under your control, labor to walk according to the Lord’s mind, and all that portion of your way which you understand not and have no power over, leave entirely to the absolute will of God. What have you to do in ordering your own way? “All the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.” If you must needs have the arrangement of your own march through the wilderness, if you will advance without the guidance of the pillar of cloud and fire, who is to provide for you, and where will you go? Your fallible judgment and feeble strength will soon fail you. Leave to your Lord’s will to ordain every step which you shall take and ask only to know so much of His mind as to be able to follow His guidance. Do not wish to pry into the secrets of the future, but “Commit your way unto the Lord.” Do not worry about the troubles or the present, but leave your way where you have left your soul. Say unto the Lord, “My Father, since this road is all too rough for my infant feet, be pleased to carry me, even as You did Your people all the days of old.” And His strong hands shall lift you up and in His bosom shall you ride over the miry places of the earth, rejoicing in almighty love. Commit and trust.

Now this brings us into the undressing room which stands side by side with the royal bedchamber. Take off the dusty garments of your cares and commit them to the Lord. Strip yourself of one anxiety

after another. Unrobe yourself of all that reminds you of this miry, weary pilgrimage, and leave your worn and travel-stained raiment. Then you need a candle to light so you can see your way to your bed—here it is for you in verse six, “He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday.” You feel convinced that what is left with God is safe. You have an assured confidence that if you commit a matter to Him you have left it in the hands of a faithful Creator—these gracious confidences will light you to your couch of rest. Like Paul, you will be at peace as to the future whether it bring you life or death, for you will say, “I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.” There is your candle. Enter the quiet chamber and take your rest. “Rest in the Lord.”

These are the steps which I have tried, briefly, to describe. There is a coming out from the fretfulness generated by the world and its cares and troubles—a pulling off the shoes, as it were—before you enter the palace, saying to your soul, “Fret not because of evildoers.” Then there is a sitting down to a feast of love by a simple but active faith.

Next there is, after the feast, the sweet dessert of communion with Christ—a leaning of the head upon the bosom of the Lord as John did at the supper, delighting oneself in the Lord and getting the desires of your inmost soul. After this comes a disrobing of everything like care and the laying aside of all that is earth-born and gross which tends to distract us. And last of all, there is the resigning of the soul to the peace which the Holy Spirit brings, which is comparable to reclining upon a soft couch, provided by Him who says to us, “My child, you are very weary; rest in the Lord.”—

*“Long did I toil and knew no earthly rest.
Far did I roam and found no certain home.
At last I sought them in His sheltering breast
Who spreads His arms and bids the weary come.
With Him I found a home, a rest divine.
And I since then am His and He is mine.”*

II. Now, let us try and form some idea of THE REST ITSELF WHICH IS BESTOWED UPON US IN THIS ROYAL CHAMBER. First, it is a rest of mind of which the prominent ingredient is a sense of security and fixedness—a fixed belief in the teachings of the divine Spirit and in the gospel which we have received, a sense of having grasped the blessings which that gospel holds out to us and therefore a sense of the certainty of our acceptance with God and of our eternal security in Christ Jesus. Beloved, if you are of the school which shifts its creed every week, if you belong to the modern-culture gentlemen, who cannot tell us what they believe because they do not know themselves, who are so eminently receptive that it appears to me that they are mainly occupied in turning out what lumber they have warehoused in order to be able to stow away more, then you will never know any rest. This hallowed state of mind cannot come to the unsettled doubter. The sacred, dove-like Spirit quits the regions of uncertainty and dwells with those who know whom they have believed. Where He dwells there is rest, but nowhere else. Look at John—the blessed, loving John—how, all through his three epistles, he continually uses that word “know.” He is a terrible Positivist. He is sure of everything. He dogmatizes gloriously and he rests. There is no rest till you are sure. A little “if” is like a stone in your shoe—you cannot travel comfortably—it blisters the foot and prevents restful progress. “Ah, but,” says one, “I do not know how to interpret such-and-such a text.” Well, then, brother, cease from interpreting it and believe it as it stands. It is infinitely better to believe God’s Word than to interpret it. Indeed, much that passes for interpretation nowadays is simply the drying of all sap and soul out of the inspired words and making them retain only a very dry and husky sense. Be more earnest to believe than to interpret. Ask, “What does the text say?” Believe that and if you do not comprehend all its meaning, do not be any the less believing. How shall God be comprehensible by finite creatures, or His glorious truth be seen in all points by such poor mortals as we are? Believe so you shall be established, and then, being established in the truth of God, grasp the blessings which that truth brings to you and rejoice therein. You believe in justification by faith—be sure that you are justified. You believe in the election of God—make your calling and election sure. You believe in the final perseverance of the saints—persevere even to the end. Grip the blessings and then understand that having believed that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God. Having put your trust in Him, there is, therefore, now no condemnation to you, for you are in Christ Jesus. As you realize these doctrines and the positive security—the indisputable security—which comes to every believer who

is relying upon Jesus, you will feel that perfect rest which is indescribable in sweetness. The rest “which only he that feels it knows.” Our rest is a sense of security.

Next, this rest is, in another aspect, contentment-perfect satisfaction with our earthly lot. Ambition spoils rest. The constant greed of avarice puts rest out of the question. The worry, the fret, the fume of accumulating, of desiring more, of impatiently coveting more than God is pleased to give—all this ruins rest. Oh, to say, “The Lord’s will be done! Having food and raiment, I am therewith content.” “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,” and to let ambition, lofty desires, fretfulness and complaining at your lot, all go and just say, “God has appointed my portion and ordained all my ways and so let it be.” This is rest. Put this together with security as to the eternal future and you have gained two very sweet ingredients with which to compose a rest worthy of the sons of God—

*“Rest, weary heart,
From all your silent griefs and secret pain,
Your profitless regrets and longings vain.
Wisdom and love have ordered all the past,
All shall be blessedness and light at last.
Cast off the cares that have so long oppressed.
Rest sweetly, rest!”*

Next, there is in this rest the idea of immovable confidence—perfect confidence in God so that when severe trial comes, the soul says, “It is right—I am sure it is right. I cannot see the reason, but I know that the trial is sent in love. I am certain of that.” When another trial befalls, child-like confidence in God still says, “It could not be better if God sends two troubles, they are better than one. And if He sends six, they are six times better than one, though they seem six times worse.” That confidence says also, “He will bring me out of it. He never sent me out yet upon the sea of tribulation but what He brought me home again. He never sent me to a battle at my own charges yet. He never bade me do a work but what He gave me strength for it. He never called me to suffer but what He sustained me under the pain.” Oh, but this is a blessed thing, to be quite confident that God cannot err, cannot forsake, cannot change, cannot cease to love and that, therefore, everything that comes from Him comes in the right way, at the right time, in the right measure, and that all is well and will end well. Though all the tempests come forth from their caverns to howl at once across the tremendous seas. Though every cyclone and hurricane that ever blew should come back again and my poor ship should be almost a wreck by reason of their fury—it is well, it is well. If only on a board or a broken piece of the ship I shall come safe to land, for so has God decreed. Glory be to His name! I will leave all to Him. This is rest—thorough rest, security, contentment, confidence.

Then, perhaps, mainly, according to the Hebrew, this rest consists in submission, for the Hebrew is, “Be silent to God.” That is the word. One of the old versions reads it, “Hold you still before God.” This holy silence is illustrated by what we read of Aaron, when his sons died, before the Lord—“Aaron held his peace.” Let your tongue be quiet. Do not murmur. Do not argue—leave all to God and bow in silence. “My soul is even as a weaned child,” said David. He would no longer cry after the warm breasts of comfort—he was weaned at last. Now, O Lord, Your will is my will. It has been a sharp lesson, but You have taught it to me at last. Before I struggled, but now I acquiesce. Once I quarreled, but now sweetly yield. Let it be as You please. Your will is mine. This also is rest—

*“This is a holier, sweeter rest,
Than the lulling rest from pain,
And a deeper calm than that which sleep
Sheds over heart and brain.
It is the soul’s surrendered choice,
The settling of the will,
Lying down gently at the cross,
God’s purpose to fulfill.”*

There comes, next, the rest of patient waiting, for that is in the text. What does it say? “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” This is to have desires, but to feel that you can waive them and tarry at the Lord’s leisure. This is to have wishes, but always to keep them tethered so that they go not too far. This is to have a will only in subserviency to the wiser and kinder will which rules above, saying ever,

“Lord, that is what I think I should wish for, but I do not certainly know whether it would be good for me or not and therefore I ask You to deny me if my wishes are wrong. My most earnest prayers, my Father, if they should not please You, do not hear them, for I would ask You rather not to hear me than to hear me if I ask amiss. I have wishes and a will and You have permitted me to have them, for You have said You will grant me the desires of my heart, but Lord, if my heart should not be delighting herself in You when she feels her desires, they shall not be my desires, I will disown them. My most supreme will shall be not to will anything except Your will, and if I do will it, I repent of so willing and discard the evil will and the undesirable desire. I will turn all willfulness out of doors by Your grace that You may have Your will.” This is a blessed spirit, dear friends, and he that has attained it has entered the royal bedchamber where he shall rest in peace, for “so He gives His beloved sleep.”

This rest means also peace—peace of soul with yourself, with your fellow men, with God. It takes two to make an enemy and if you will not be one of the two, you will not have an enemy seriously to distress you. Men may dislike you, but they shall be held in check, for “when a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” “He makes the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder thereof does He restrain.” At any rate, the assured believer possesses that peace which Christ had, who when His foes gathered round about Him and sought to catch Him in His words, baffled them all by His calm self-possession.

This rest means quiet happiness, inward calm. The soul has mounted where it desires to be and does not intend to move from its position. Noah’s dove has been round the earth and seen nothing but waste of waters, but she has flown home at last, she is in Noah’s hand, and she means to stay in the ark until the better times shall come and the waters are alleviated. Oh, if any of you have wandered and lost the peace which Christ gives, even that which He gives not to the world—if you are troubled and fretful, and envious and weary—commune with your own heart this morning and say, “Return unto your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Say to your heart as I have said to mine, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” “Rest in the Lord.”

To close our description of rest, I think we must add one other term to it. It is the rest of expectation, especially in regard to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest fret that some of us ever have is about the cause of God. Personal troubles and domestic troubles sit very lightly on some of us, but church trouble perplexes us. Not in my case, because none of you who love the Lord ever intentionally cause me distress of mind, but there are some who walk, of whom we would tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ and yet they have entered into the church to her dishonor and injury. And outside this church, outside in the great church of Christ, you can see everywhere, looming heavily over us, the black clouds of Romanism, and amidst the gloom, the specters of skepticism are flitting to and fro. Everything in these times seems to be loose and out of joint. The men of “thought” have pulled up the old landmarks. They have broken down the hedges and laid the Lord’s enclosures common to all that pass by the way. Behold, they go about to break down the carved work of the sanctuary with their axes. They defile the temple of the Lord. Nothing is sacred for these wise men of modern times. No truth that was taught by their sires can be taught by them. The doctrines of grace to these men are platitudes and the doctrine of the cross itself is denied, or when not denied, so obscured that we know not what it is. Scarcely do they themselves know what it is they affirm. They are great at questions and negations. Novelties of doctrine are poured out upon the earth in countless number as the frogs which came up in the apocalyptic vision. And what shall the end be? “Go your way,” says God to His beloved, “for you shall rest and stand in your lot in the end of the days.” Christ will take care of His own church, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Leave all this to Him who sees the end as well as the beginning and to whom the victory shall surely come. Your strength is to sit still. Rest in the Lord with expectation that He will overrule the evil and will Himself surely come to end it all and reign among His ancients gloriously.

III. Lastly, and here I needed time, but with my usual improvidence I have squandered it—our third point is, let us enter and examine THE ROYAL CHAMBER ITSELF. “Rest in the Lord.” Now the text does not say rest in anything about the Lord, but rest in the Lord Himself. Oh that the Spirit might bring us into such union and communion with God that we must to the full know the meaning of this text.

“Rest in the Lord!” The Lord has revealed Himself to us in these days in the person of His only-begotten Son. Jesus, akin to us by nature, Jesus, our substitute and surety, Jesus, our all in all. Now, beloved, come near to Jesus by a living faith, hide yourselves in Jesus, enter into His wounds, feel your safety in Him, your union to Him. Live to Him, live with Him, live for Him, live in Him and as you do so you must rest. Only in the Lord is there any rest for you, but as you are a man in Christ Jesus and lose yourself in Him, your life being hidden with Christ in God, in that way, in that way only, shall you find perfect rest. What a resting place do saints find in the finished work of Jesus! Let but the Holy Spirit lead them to see the glory of His atoning blood and they are sure to rest. Let me tenderly entreat the tempted believer to tell Jesus all his case and look to Him for that rest which He Himself promised when He said, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and you shall find rest unto your souls.”—

“Rest, weary soul!

The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,

For all your sins full satisfaction made.

Strive not to do yourself what Christ has done,

Claim the free gift and make the joy your own.

No more by pangs of guilt and fear distress,

Rest, sweetly rest!”

Although this is obviously the main meaning, we may add that, “Rest in the Lord,” means rest in Him as your covenant God. You have not to deal with an abstract deity who stands afar off as your offended Creator. Behold, beloved, if you believe in Jesus, the Lord has entered into an everlasting covenant with you, ordered in all things and sure. He has said concerning you, “I will not turn away from you to do you good.” He has promised to keep you and preserve you and bring you into His eternal glory by a covenant signed and sealed with the precious blood of Christ. “Rest in the Lord.” He will keep His covenant even to its jots and tittles, therefore be not disquieted. The eternal shalls and wills shall never fail. “This is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you.” Glory be unto our covenant God! Come and rest in Him, beloved.

Then rest in all the relationships into which the Lord has been pleased to bring Himself. Know that this God of yours is your shield and your exceeding great reward. He is your rock, your dwelling place, your Shepherd and your Preserver. Best of all, He is your Father. Oh, brethren, one cannot talk about this. One wants to drink it in by quiet meditation. It is a bliss too great for words to be indeed a child of the heavenly Father! Jehovah is Creator of heaven and earth, Maker and Destroyer, and yet I am His child, and as surely as a child may trust its parent and rest in its mother’s bosom, so surely and safely may I trust my Father and rest in Him.

Do you not know, too, that to set forth the nearness and tenderness of His relationship to us, the Lord is pleased to describe Himself as the husband of our souls? For, “Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name.” “I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.” Shall not the spouse trust her husband? I hope we will each of us say to Him this morning, “Lord, I do trust You, for I love You since You have made me one with You in blessed union, and I say to You today as the Church did of old, ‘Tell me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turns aside by the flocks of Your companions?’” Rest in your Friend, your Savior, your all in all. I leave the full list of divine relationships for you to think of at your leisure. They are all full of rest.

Rest, next, in each one of the attributes of God. Are you conscious of sin? Come and rest in the mercy which blots it out. Poor sinner, I would gladly invite you with the burden of your guilt upon you, to remember that He delights in mercy, that it is God’s joy to pass by transgression. You will never escape from the bondage of your sin except as you come to the mercy of God in Jesus Christ His Son. Rest in boundless mercy. Beloved child of God, are you troubled about inward sin—then rest in His power to break the neck of corruption. Perhaps your affliction concerns your worldly affairs—then rest in the power of God to help you. He is great at a dead lift and when none can help us but God, then is God most ready to come to the rescue. Rest, beloved brothers and sisters, in God’s wisdom. You cannot see

your way, but He can see it, leave it to Him, for there is no possibility of error in His counsels. Rest also in His immutability—that sure anchor amid the troubled sea of life. You have changes every day—He never changes. Come back to Him whose constancy of love is a mountain of strength. He has set His mind upon saving you and He is of one mind and who shall turn Him? This is His mind—that He that believes and is baptized shall be saved and He will perform that salvation, nor death nor hell shall thwart the sacred purpose of an unchanging God. He will carry out His gracious work and glorify Himself therein. Rest also in His faithfulness. What He has promised He will perform. He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Has He said and shall He not do it? Take His promise and believe it to be as good as fulfilled, for so it is.

Rest also in His Word which He has written for your consolation. The Holy Spirit has in a thousand ways declared the divine goodwill towards you—meditate upon what He has dictated. As full as the skies are of stars so full are the Scriptures with promises. Take these precious promises, one by one, believe them and pray to the Lord, saying, “Fulfill this Word unto Your servant whereon You have caused me to hope. O Lord, do as You have said.” Then sweetly rest in the eternal truthfulness, for the Lord will keep every one of His promises to you.

What a subject I have before me! I seem to be like those bold explorers in the northern seas, before whom a passage opens up to the left and then another channel on the right. They sail into the center of a great bay and then further on enter upon another sea and know not how wide the ocean may yet become still further on. My text is an ocean to which I see no boundary. It is full of wondrous grace, but I have neither time nor ability to sail over its shoreless surface. I must leave you to spread the sails of meditation, and favored by the gales of the Spirit’s influences, I trust you will be borne along—not to an ocean of primeval ice—but to the condition of unbroken rest in the Lord.

Next, let us rest in the will of God. It is a high point to arrive at to feel that my Father’s will is such that I can entirely rest in it, let it be whatever it may. Yet it would not be so difficult if we were not so depraved. O for conquering grace to crush down self. I would be as a grain of dust blown in the summer’s gale without power to change my course, carried on by the irresistible breath of the Lord—forever made willingly unwilling to will anything but the will of my Lord. I would be as a tiny straw borne along by the Gulf Stream, carried wherever the warm love of God shall bear me, delighting to lie low and see the Lord alone exalted. The Buddhists talk about being absorbed into Buddha and ceasing to be, and they make it their heaven to be at last swallowed up in God. I know the falsehood of this teaching, but I know that there is a truth which is very like it in outward aspect. Oh, to be nothing! To be less than nothing! To have no will and no desire about life or death, about sickness or health, about poverty or wealth—no will about anything—and yet to have a strong resolved will to deny self and say, “Not as I will, but as You will.” This is to rest in the Lord.

Beloved, may the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, grant you abundantly from this day forward to enter into this which is man’s first, man’s last, man’s sweetest, truest rest—the rest of the sinner coming to Christ—the rest of the saint abiding in heaven. This is the only real rest that can be found on earth or heaven—rest in the Lord. God grant it to us by faith, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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