

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



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- Through the Bible with the Children – Bible Stories told by Mr Seaton.
- Congregational Praise – the singing of our Church during Worship Services
- Sermons preached by Dr Needham and Mr Seaton
- Historical Lectures given in the Church by Dr Needham
- Podcasts on Various Subjects
- Audio Archive of Sermons from 1970 to 2002 (A Work in Progress)

The Day of Rest – Its Fullness

The Pastor's Letter (February 1977)

Dear Friends,

The remembrance that the people of God will one day be in heaven with God is a remembrance that should often be brought to mind as we still live on this earth. After the Lord God had made the heavens and the earth and all things that they contain in six days, we are told that He then, “rested on the seventh day.” (Genesis 2:2). Not only did God rest on the seventh day, but He “declared” the fact, so to speak, for, we read in the next verse that “blessed” and “sanctified” that seventh day of rest.

Now, for whose benefit could that declaration have been made, but for the “man” that God had created and made as the very last act of the very last day of His creating works? And when God declared a “rest”, it seems clear that He declared it as something that His creation would enjoy and enter into by God's graciousness to him. As we know, of course, that free entrance into all the benefits of God was forfeited in the fall of our first parents; but it, is now the very essence of the gospel word that man may yet enter into the rest of God and be with his God and Saviour for ever and ever. Thus, having made that rest for man at the very beginning, and now, by grace, permitting man to yet enter that rest *in spite of his sinful fall*, we might well expect that God will have us remember that rest to come in all the pages of the Word of God following on from the first few verses of the 2nd chapter of the book of Genesis. And this is exactly the case; for throughout the Word of God, the eternal rest that belongs to the redeemed of the Lord is set before us in its “physical”, “spiritual”, and “actual” expressions for our continued and continuing consideration. No wonder the mighty Augustine discovered, “O

God, thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” And God will not let us forget that rest that remaineth, and points us to it throughout His truth.

So, in Israel of old, the eternal rest is displayed for us in its “physical” expression – a picture of what is yet to come. It is expressed in “word” and in “act.” In word, in the fourth of the Ten Commandments given to Israel at the hand of Moses: “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy” etc. And with that command goes the reason for keeping that command: - “**For** in six days the Lord made heaven and earth ... and rested ... wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Their remembrance of the day is a remembrance of the rest of God – that rest which God first observed right at the beginning of this world's history.

The “rest” is also pictured in Israel's “land” that they were just about to enter into when Moses gave them those commandments from the Lord. That land was known as Israel's “rest,” for the apostle Paul reminds us how “God sware in his wrath (to the unbelieving of that old nation) they shall not enter into my rest.” And, indeed, the older generation didn't enter Canaan. But then, Paul goes on to show us that, indeed, Canaan was only a picture of the true rest of God, and proceeds with his conclusion, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God,” That “rest” yet remains for us today if we are “born of His Spirit and washed in His blood,” for it is the eternal rest of the eternal presence of God in heaven above.

Now then, when we come into the New Testament, we find that the remembrance of this day of rest is no less set before us, but here, in the “spiritual” expression of it (for the Bible always moves from physical, to spiritual, to actual.) And when we consider the church of the N.T. meeting together on the “first day

of the week to break bread,” we are immediately struck with the fact that she has left the “physical” Jewish sabbath behind and has moved into her own unique expression of the day of God's rest. They met to “break bread;” to “remember” in fact, the death of the Lord until He come. So, their gathering was a “remembrance,” and is a looking forward to something. And it was on “the first day of the week,” - the day “in which he left the grave, and Satan's empire fell.” And that, of course, was the “beginning” of the “new creation” of God in its fullest sense – and it began, in absolute accord with the old, on “the first day” when “light” poured forth from the darkened tomb in the resurrection of the Saviour. And so this “new” creating work of God will go on through all the necessary “days” that it will take to complete it, until – until the Sabbath comes, and all the new-created works of God are caught up in that eternal rest of God that shall never be broken throughout endless ages. Death, resurrection, coming again; these are the spiritual works of the church's sabbath – her Lord's day – and they are her remembrances until He come.

Then comes the “actual;” then comes heaven; then comes the one great thing that the people of God from the beginning have had in remembrance even from the beginning – in physical form in the Old, and in spiritual in the New. And what will that “rest” be like? We like Richard Baxter's description: “O blessed rest, where we shall *never* rest day or night, crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.”

Sincerely,
W.J. Seaton

Gleanings in the Psalms

Psalm 77 (Concluded)



Verse 10. “And I said This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.” It is the “infirmity” of the believer to be always thinking of himself, and drawing false inferences from what he sees and feels in himself, with regards as to how he is held and estimated on the part of God. It is his *strength*, on the other hand, to remember “the right hand of the most High.” To meditate upon the changeless truth and mercy of that God who has committed himself in holiness to the believing sinners sure salvation, by causing the Son of His love to suffer in our stead the dread reality of penal death.

Arthur Pridham

Verse 10. “... the years of the right hand of the most High.” Not the moments, nor the hours, nor the days, of a few short afflictions, that His *left* hand hath dealt to me; but “the years of the right hand;” - those long, large, and boundless mercies wherewith He hath comforted me.

Thomas Adams

Verse 11. “I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old.” Faith has a good memory, and can tell the Christian many stories of ancient mercies; and when the believer's present meal falls short, faith can entertain the soul with a cold dish, and not complain that God keeps a bad house. Thus David recovered himself when he was even tumbling down the hill of temptation. “This is my infirmity ... but I will remember the wonders of old.” Therefore, Christian, when thou art in the depths of affliction and Satan tempts thee to cast aspersions at God – as if God were forgetful of thee – stop his mouth with this: “No, Satan, God has not forgotten to do for me, but I have forgotten what He has already done for me, or else I would not question his fatherly care over me at this present time.” Go, Christian, look over thine own lessons; praise God for past mercies, and it will not

be long before thou hast a new song put into thy mouth for a present mercy.

William Gurnall

Verse 13. “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary ...” Only in God's presence is God's providence understandable. As David has earlier been perplexed at the prosperity of the wicked, “*until*,” as he says, “I went into the sanctuary of God, *then* understood I their end.” The heart is easily led astray from God's ways by what the eye imagines it sees; only in God's presence through His truth is it rightly focussed to discern the paths of righteousness. Yet, we must remember that God is God, and often His providences and purposes lie hidden for manys a year. Martin Luther tells of a time when he sought and sought the Lord's directive for a certain course, and only ever received the answer - “I am not to be traced.” “Well, then,” said Luther, “If He is not to be traced, He may yet be trusted.” John Flavel hit the nail aright when he remarked, “Some of God's providences are like Hebrew letters, they must be read backwards.”

Verse 20. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” He does not say that Moses and Aaron led the people of Israel, but *Thou* leddest the people – *Thy* people - by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Great was the power of these two men; nevertheless, neither of them was the true shepherd of the sheep, but each was a servant to the one and only True Shepherd, to whom the sheep exclusively belonged. Nor yet, was either the leader of the sheep, but the shepherd Himself was present and led his own flock, to which these two acted as servants.

There are, therefore, three things to be learned from this passage. First, the sheep do not belong to the servants, but to the true shepherd. Secondly, the true shepherd is the leader of His own sheep. Thirdly, the office of Moses and Aaron was to attend to this duty, that the Lord's sheep should be properly led and pastured. So Christ Himself leads his sheep, His own sheep, yet for this work He employs the ministry of His servants.

Musculus

Verse 20. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock ...” What a transition from tempest to peace, from wrath to love. Quietly as a flock Israel was guided on by human agency which veiled the excessive glory of the Divine presence. The smiter of Egypt was the Shepherd of Israel. He

drove His foes before Him, yet went before His people. Therefore, with devout joy and full of consolation, we close this psalm. It is the song of one who at the beginning, had forgotten how to speak, and yet learned to sing far more sweetly than all his fellows.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

A Minister's Conversion.

By F.W. Krummacher

Several years ago there lived not far from us a very gifted preacher who had, at this period of which we speak, for a considerable time announced with great energy and success the word from the cross; and who, as we may suppose, had his share of enemies.

One of his opponents, a man of information, from a distaste for the truth had long ceased to frequent the church. One Sabbath morning he thought he would once more hear the stern man preach. He went to the church. The preacher treated of the narrow way, which he made neither smaller nor wider than it is made in the Word of God. During the sermon the visitor thinks within himself; "How is this? If what the man is saying be the truth, O my God, what will be the consequence?" This thought cleaved to him. Wherever he went he heard the whisper in his heart: "Is it truth or falsehood?"

At last he thought of going to the preacher to ask him, upon his conscience: was he convinced of the truth of what he had asserted? "Sir," he accosts the preacher, "I was one of your hearers a short time since, when you preached of the only way of salvation. You have disturbed my inward peace; and I cannot refrain from asking you solemnly, before God, and upon your conscience, whether you can prove your assertions." The minister replies with decisive assurance, that he had spoken God's Word, and consequently infallible truth. "O my God!" exclaimed his visitor, "is it thus? Dear sir, what will become of us?" "Of us," thinks the minister, rather startled; and, repulsing the strange "us" from his heart, he commences expounding to the enquirer the doctrine of redemption, and exhorts him to repentance and faith. But the latter, as if he had not heard

a single syllable the preacher was saying interrupts him, and, with increasing warmth, repeats the anxious exclamation: “if it is the truth, dear sir, I pray you, what shall we do?”

Terrified, the preacher staggers back. “We” he thinks, “What means this 'we'?” and, striving to conceal the uneasiness and confusion of his heart, he begins anew to explain and exhort. Tears start to the eyes of his visitor, and, clasping his hands like one in despair, he exclaims with a voice that might have moved the very stones: “dear sir, if it is the truth, then we are lost!” The preacher stands pale, trembling; his voice fails him. He cast his eyes to the ground, and then embracing his visitor, amid sobs he says, “My friend, down into the dust, and let us pray and wrestle.” they bend their knees, they pray, they embrace each other, and the stranger departs.

The preacher locks himself up in his room, and on the Sabbath following he is indisposed, and unable to appear in the pulpit. The next Sabbath is the same. On the third he appears before the congregation grief-worn and pale, yet with looks of joy, and commences his sermon with the affecting declaration that it was only now that he also had made his way through the narrow gate.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

When you wake in the morning, do you think, “what day is today?” Before people in Britain knew anything about God, they worshipped many idols.

Monday was the “moon's” day, Wednesday was “Woden's” day, Thursday was set aside for the thunder God named “Thor,” and so on. However when the good news of Jesus Christ was brought to Britain, and people began to read the Bible, they learned that all things were created and cared for by God. We must ever remember this and thank God for each day of our life.

One morning very, very early, a little boy called Kevin woke up. It was spring time and he could hear the birds singing in the trees in the garden. He decided to go out and see what he could see. So, putting on his slippers, and a jumper on top of his pyjamas, he slipped downstairs.

There certainly were lots of birds busily fluttering, and flying, and singing, and feeding their little young ones. What fun to watch them! However, he heard his mother calling. He quickly ran in to the kitchen and immediately got a row from his mummy for getting his feet so wet.

Poor Kevin, he couldn't understand how his feet had got so wet. It wasn't raining, and it hadn't been raining for a few days. "Mummy, where did the wet come from?" asked the little boy. His mother took him on her knee, and this is what she told him.

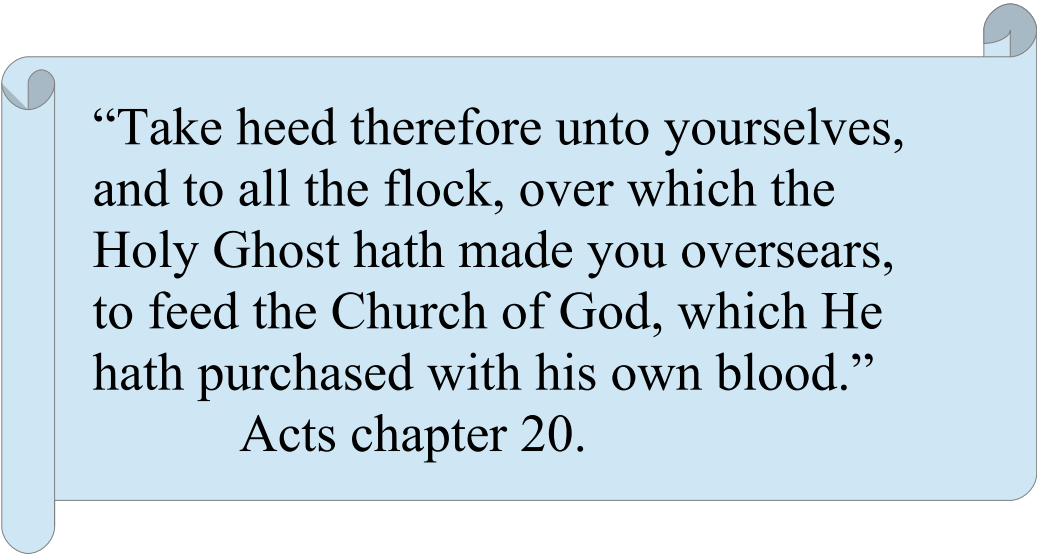
Kevin your feet are wet because you have been walking on the dew that is on the grass. That is what the wet is called. When the ground has been warmed by the sun all day, and the night air is cool, the warmth of the ground and the coolness of the air meet, and make moisture which forms into little dew-drops on the grass and flowers and leaves. It is only on the ground for a very short time, but God puts it there for a good reason. It refreshes the grass and flowers during the night. Birds and little insects love it; it is their favourite breakfast drink. But as soon as the sun comes up it vanishes away."

Well, boys and girls, isn't it wonderful that we can look around us and see many things that tell us of God's goodness and care? Even the little insects in the ground are looked after in marvellous ways. Let us all remember each day to thank God for all his goodness.

"All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."

Love,
Mrs Seaton.





“Take heed therefore unto yourselves,
and to all the flock, over which the
Holy Ghost hath made you oversears,
to feed the Church of God, which He
hath purchased with his own blood.”
Acts chapter 20.

An Essential Exhortation

That charge of Paul's to the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20 was held by Richard Baxter to be one of the most essential exhortations for initial and continued study for those concerned in the work of the pastoral office in the churches of Christ. “It better deserveth a twelve month's study,” he says, “than most things that young students do lay out their time in.” and to those already engaged in the work, he goes on - “O brethren, write it on your study doors, or set it as your copy in capital letters before your eyes. Could we but well learn two or three lines of it, what preachers should we be! Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do yourselves and the Church more good than twenty year's study of those lower things, which, thought they get you greater applause in the world, yet separated from these, will make you but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.”

Precious Notes from Moody Stuart

Dr A. Moody Stuart was the Edinburgh preacher under whose ministry Robert Murray McCheyne spent his student days.

Next to experiencing the work of the Lord in our own hearts, is the happiness of beholding that work *in others*. It is an angelic joy, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. It is a divine joy, for the Great Shepherd brings home His lost one, rejoicing and saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep that was lost.” In partaking of it we enter into the Joy of the Lord, and nothing more effectually revives our souls in first faith. It is high honour and privilege to be used of Christ in any of His wonderful works towards the sons of men. It is an almost equal privilege and honour to be called by Him to *witness* those works; to be taken along with Him when He raises the dead and opens the eyes of the blind – for it is little more that any man ever does in the salvation of others than stand by and behold the work of the Lord.

Nothing humbles so effectually as to receive honour and privilege of which you are consciously unworthy, and to which you are manifestly unequal. The “high calling” humbles its recipients in the dust; and beneath the royal purple is ever found the meekest and lowliest of all the children of men.

The abundant manna falling openly round the camp is cheerfully gathered, without labour as without price. But after a season Jesus says to the soul, “To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna.” (Revelation 2:17). It is still the bread of life as before; it is equally without money as at first; but the call now comes - “Labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give.” (John 6 :27). Many in this hour refuse the labour, refuse to seek and strive, refuse to obtain by overcoming. Some turn aside altogether from such trial, proving that they had never truly tasted that the Lord is gracious. Others sadly fail in earnest seeking, and never make that progress in grace which their first start promised.

We cannot, indeed, be always expressly looking to Christ. In doing those things that our hand finds to do, such an exercise is often impossible. But, it is just like reading or working at night: then, we look not at the candle, but at the work before us. Yet, if the light be obscured, we note the difference as quickly as if we were expressly watching it. Let us strive so as to walk under the light of God's countenance all the day, that if a cloud passes between the Light of Life and our souls, it may be instantly perceived, and its removal diligently sought.

The heart is, of all things, the hardest to give to Christ, yet the thing without which all other things are nothing, and the giver of them all but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Very often also, when we have given our heart to God, and then followed it with other offerings, we then slowly steal out of the first great single gift again – the one central jewel in the signet that gave it all its worth and beauty – and leave only the outer settings round the absent jewel.

In the Christian ministry, it is not what we seek for others that usually profits them most, but what God makes us seek and find for ourselves, and then to testify to others what we have seen, and to speak to them what we know. It is the lack of this element that makes much of our preaching so powerless; for it is the God-taught man that is the God-sent messenger. It is Christ found by us for our own souls in solitude that is Christ preached by us on the house-tops, and so lifted up that all men are drawn to Him. “If they had stood in My counsel, and heard and marked my words, they should have turned the people from their evil way.” (Jeremiah 23:18.) So it is with the ministers of the everlasting gospel in their public testimony, and so it is with every follower of Jesus by whom the Lord would send a message to a perishing soul. Have you sought Christ alone? Have you shut the door and prayed in secret till you have found **Him** whom the Father, that seeth in secret, reveals to the inquiring soul.

Jesus must be deepest within the heart of man, expressly claiming for Himself the innermost chamber of the soul. Alas! When the secrets of all hearts are revealed, in how many will some treasure be found deeper than the Lord Jesus Christ. Have none of us reason to tremble lest when the depths within are broken up, not Christ be found, but that loathsome reptile self?