

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness.—Isa. 35-8

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THE REST OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Text: Heb. 4:3—"For we which have believed do enter into rest."

Between Hebrews 3:7 and 4:11 the word "rest" occurs eleven times. In 4:5 the word refers to God's rest following the six days of creation, and in the other ten instances it refers to the rest which God has promised to His children.

This rest was first promised to the Israelites who came out of Egypt, and was to be realized in their possession of the land of Canaan. In Deut. 12:9, 10 this land is called a rest and an inheritance.

The writer to the Hebrews in explaining in this passage, that, while God was grieved with the Israelites, and because of their unbelief and disobedience, in His displeasure, He declared that they could not enter into His rest; we, also, in this dispensation must be concerned lest we fall by the same example of unbelief and fail to enter the rest promised to us. For, as he explains further—as in the time of David—the Holy Ghost is still saying, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Then what is this rest which the writer is urging us to enter, which he says still remains to the children of God (v. 9), and which some are, by faith, now enjoying (v. 3)?

As the land of Canaan is a type of the experience of entire sanctification, so the rest which is the promised inheritance of God's children in this age is the same blessed experience. And as the land promised to Israel was to be possessed and enjoyed during their earthly lifetime, this spiritual rest is also promised as a present experience. "We which have believed do enter into rest;" not future tense, "will enter" by growth, nor at death; but "do enter," present tense.

A Second Rest

It is plain that this rest is a second experience for it is only for those who have already become God's children. V. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Jesus said to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:16-17.

In Matt. 11:28-30, Jesus speaks of two rests. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This is the first rest. And how true it is that when we come to Jesus, having labored—tried so hard to be good in our own strength, and heavy laden with the burden of our sins, what rest came to our souls when the burden rolled away and we were freely pardoned!

But what about the second rest? We so often sing:

"Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast,
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest."

Jesus further says "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." In other words, "Come, work side by side with Me. I am in one side of the yoke, you come into the other and go the meek and lowly way instructed by Me. In this union and communication you will find rest to your soul." For "My yoke is easy and My burden light." Therefore to obtain this rest, there must be perfect consecration, a complete yielding, a taking of His yoke upon us. In the same yoke with Jesus, thus bound together, learning from Him, working with Him, how can we fall into error? or how can we become weary in the way? He chooses our tasks and then goes with us as we perform them. Of course it is a way of rest. For rest does not mean inactivity, nor idleness, for these bring languor and not true rest. What disturbs us in this world is not outward calamities, but a rebellious will, a will unconformed to our work, an unsubmitive spirit toward our lot in life. When activity and rest are blended, we enjoy both without the wear and tear of the first, or the languor of the other.

Therefore we see that the first rest is a deliverance from the burden of sins committed, and the second rest—so prominent in this portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews—is a freedom from sin inherited, that which causes us to rebel; which breeds discontent; which hinders the perfect service of the un-sanctified Christian.

That this second rest is entered as an instantaneous work of grace, and on condition of faith, is shown in the text, "We which have believed do enter into rest." When we enter a building there is a definite time when we pass from the outside to the inside. When a man enters the state of matrimony, in the instant certain words are pronounced he becomes a married man. Just as definitely we come to the place where our consecration is complete, and by faith we enter the promised rest. If that experience has come to your life, you haven't forgotten it. Oh, how weary Laws trying to make myself believe I was sanctified wholly, but over and over the doubts would arise, and failures would be prominent. But there came a day when the Holy Spirit came in sanctifying power, baptizing me, cleansing me, refreshing me. The doubts were gone and have never returned—and a wonderful rest settled in my soul. Not a rest from restlessness, accompanied by a spirit eager for service.

Yes, it is by faith. "And God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as He did unto us and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8, 9. The Israelites failed to enter their

promised land of rest because of unbelief. How earnestly the writer in this lesson exhorts the Hebrews to "enter" lest they come short, and to "labor," hasten, to enter in lest any fall by the same example. "We which have believed do enter into rest."

A Sabbath Rest

In the translation of the word "rest" in the passage, some the from the Greek word meaning cessation from labor with the thought of relaxation and refreshing, and the others from a word meaning the Sabbath, including a rest for both soul and body. That both terms refer to the experience of holiness without contradiction is very clear, for the experience of heart purity does include both a relaxation and refreshing, and is also a Sabbath of rest and communion with all that the word Sabbath implies.

In v. 4 we have a quotation from Genesis, "And God did rest the seventh day from all His works" that is, the work of creation. This was not a rest necessitated by exhaustion, nor for a recruiting of strength, but a cessation of work because the work was complete, and a repose of satisfaction in the accomplishment of His purpose in the foundation work of the world.

In v. 9 we see the relation of Sabbath rest to the experience of the sanctified person. "There remaineth therefore a rest (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God." And further in v. 10 "For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His."

To the Hebrews, keeping the Sabbath meant abstaining from all secular labor, and observing the day in a strictly religious and sacred manner. "Their own works," as to many today, consisted in numerous ceremonies, rites, and ordinances. How many have found these to be burdens, and in finding the better way, have rejoiced in rest from them. So as God ceased from His labors of creation, those who enter this experience, cease from works which have no compensating value. And as God finished a creation which has been developing and working ever since when we cease from our own ways and let the Holy Spirit live in us and work through us, there is a free spontaneous expression, and a constant development of the soul, accompanied by spiritual work.

Often we hear someone say, "I am so glad when Sunday comes." And we know they are glad because they may lay aside the toils of the week and relax, and center their minds on worship and Christian service. So in this Sabbath experience, our work, even though of a secular nature, becomes a sacred duty. Whatever our task, we do it for His glory. Therefore it is a Sabbath, a life of service and of precious communion with Him.

A Sweet Rest

Then also, this Second Rest, this Sabbath Rest, is a sweet Rest. It is a gift from God's own person. In several instances in this passage the word is modified by a Divine possessive—

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