

The Resting-Place Forgotten

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering God as our resting-place and the consequences of forgetting Him.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:18, Jeremiah 50:6, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 3:12

Topics: "Rest in God", "Spiritual Forgetfulness"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the tragic forgetfulness of humanity regarding their true resting-place, which is found in God and Christ Jesus. He draws parallels between Israel's apostasy and modern man's tendency to seek rest in worldly distractions rather than in the divine provision of peace and security. Bonar highlights that this forgetfulness leads to spiritual emptiness and punishment, as God desires to be the refuge for the weary soul. He urges listeners to recognize the necessity and availability of this resting-place, warning against the dangers of preferring false comforts over the true rest found in God. Ultimately, Bonar calls for a return to the awareness of God's love and the rest He offers to all who seek Him.

Transcript

"They have forgotten their resting-place." --Jeremiah 50:6

IT was of Israel's apostasy that the prophet spoke. As Moses said, "Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:18). So here Jeremiah says, "They have forgotten their resting-place." Thus it is with man! He has forgotten his resting-place! He has left God! "There is in him the evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

I. The resting-place. Israel had a resting-place. He is compared to a sheep who had a fold, and a shepherd, and pasture. That fold or resting-place was Jehovah's temple in the holy city; or you may say, Jehovah himself. They forsook him and his temple to serve other gods. Yet still he was their resting-place; a place for their rest, if they would but have taken it. So is it with man, the sinner. There is a resting-place for him. He needs it, and God has provided it. It is his resting-place. It is God himself,--Christ Jesus, in whom there is "rest,"--"I will give you rest." As he is our "hiding-place," so he is our "resting-place." In him there is divine provision made for giving rest to the weary. He is the God-man, and that is rest; He is the propitiation for our sins, and that is rest; so that, as the sin-bearer, and the burden-bearer, he is our rest. In him is contained, and presented to us, the great love of God. As the protection from wrath, as the shadow from the heat, as the security from danger, as the divine fullness of all needed blessing, he is our

resting-place. The Father knowing what we needed, has made provision in him for us. All that can give a sinner rest is contained in him; for Christ is all and in all. There is but one resting-place; not many. He who gains it has enough; he who misses it, misses everything; for there is no other resting-place for Israel or for us. One rock, one refuge, one foundation, one salvation, one resting-place!

II. Man's forgetfulness of it. The simple charge here against Israel is that of forgetting the resting-place. No strong words are used, such as despising, or dishonouring, or rejecting. All these may be true, but God confines himself to the mildest and simplest, that no man may evade the charge, or console his conscience with the thought that the description is exaggerated. God simply charges him with "forgetfulness." This "resting place" is not prized nor used; it is forgotten; it is out of sight, out of mind, out of heart. This forgetfulness is strange and unaccountable. There are so many reasons why he should not forget it.

(1.) It is so needful. He cannot dispense with it. Other things may be, this must be. To a weary soul, what so necessary as a resting-place?

(2.) It is so blessed. It contains both rest and blessedness. It is not like sleep, or the insensibility produced by opiates. It is blessedness, as well as rest.

(3.) It has been provided at such a cost. God knew that man needed it, and how much he needed it, and he provided it at an infinite cost.

Yet in spite of all this the fact remains,--he does forget it. How and why is this?

(1.) He does not feel his need of it. He thinks he can do without it. He has others. He has Abana and Pharpar, which are to him better than Jordan.

(2.) He does not know how blessed it would make him. What a rest it would be to him in his day of weariness. His thoughts of blessedness are all earthly and carnal.

(3.) He hates the God that provided it. The natural heart is full of this hatred. Hatred of God must lead men to seek to put all remembrance of the rest out of mind.

(4.) He hates its provisions. Its provisions are holy and righteous. They are all connected with God himself. And hence man's object is to close his eyes and ears against a rest whose provisions and characteristics are all holy and divine.

III. Man's preference for other rests. We ought not to call them rests, for they are not so. They are labour and weariness, sorrow and trouble. Israel wandered like lost sheep, from mountain to hill, in search of other rests, as if anything were better than God's. So does man. He wanders about seeking rest, and finding none. But poor as the other rests are, man prefers them to that of One in whom he has no delight. The sinner is weary, and he seeks rest. He seeks it for himself. He goes from place to place, from object to object, seeking rest. Each one is poor, but he prefers it to God and to God's rest. This preference of creature-objects as the soul's rest is unspeakably sad and sinful; yet it is universal. There is hardly any object in creation which man has not tried, in preference, deliberate preference, to God. For it is all deliberate. It is not hasty, nor sudden, nor transient, but prolonged and resolute,--thoroughly wilful. It is this deliberate preference of other resting-places for the soul that is the great aggravation of his apostasy.

IV. The evil of all this. It is thoroughly evil; evil without palliation or excuse; evil towards God, and evil to himself. It brings punishment with it; it leaves the soul unsatisfied.

(1.) It brings punishment with it. God avenges this forgetfulness, this preference of other objects; for God is jealous. He chastened Israel; he does so to the sinner, both here and hereafter. God does not let us suppose that he overlooks the sin. He judges the sinner, and will judge him hereafter. He shews us how he resents the dishonour. Many a sorrow of earth is God's stroke of vengeance because of this forgetfulness. And will not hell be the completed vengeance of Jehovah because of this? God sends blight here on man for this contempt of the resting-place. But the eternal blight hereafter is infinitely terrible.

(2.) It leaves the soul unsatisfied. It fills no part of it; it does nothing to make it happy. It may drown the awful sense of emptiness for a while, but that is all. The weariness returns; and still the soul asks, Who will shew us any good? No amount of pleasure, or excitement, or gaiety, or business can remove the weariness. Rather is that weariness increased the more it is tried to be removed.

1. Do you know that there is a resting-place? Have you not heard the report of it? There is such a thing as rest in a weary world. The goodness of it has gone abroad, Do not say then, it is vain to think to be happy; rest is impossible here. There is a resting-place.

2. Do you know what and where that resting-place is? It is to be found in God and his Son Christ Jesus. It is not afar off, but near. It is not inaccessible, but quite open and approachable. It is not costly, but free: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

3. Are you forgetting it, and preferring other rests to it? Most men are doing so. Are you? This is the way of the world; is it your way? Are you a forgetter of the rest? You may be no open sinner, but are you a forgetter of the rest?

4. Do you know the peril of so doing? It is misery here, it is woe hereafter. The wrath of God abideth upon you. That soul of yours is sad even in the midst of pleasure. Your prospects are fearful in the extreme; for what but everlasting burnings are in store for them that forget God, or forget the resting-place? Take the resting-place as it is. It is sufficient for you. It will remove your weariness. Go then and rest.

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