

The precious joy of seventh-day sabbath-keeping

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure [business] on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure [business], nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

Creation was not a physical work; it was wholly spiritual. God spoke, and it was. And His word is spirit.

Therefore, to keep God's Sabbath or rest is to enjoy spiritual rest. The Sabbath is not designed for mere physical rest, but for spiritual. It has a higher meaning than is commonly attached to it.

True, we are enjoined from doing our own labor on that day, but the cessation from physical labor on the Sabbath day is but an emblem of the spiritual rest which God gives to those who accept Him as the Creator of all things. Without spiritual rest there is no true Sabbath-keeping.

One may refrain from labor on the seventh day as scrupulously as ever the strictest Pharisee did; yet if he does not delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is not keeping the Sabbath.

"If I should keep the seventh day, how could I make a living?" The Sabbath itself points out the answer. The idea of Sabbath observance is that of perfect trust in God, whose love for His creatures is equal to His power to do them good.

"Should a man in an extremity labor on the Sabbath to harvest when that seems the only hope of securing the crop?" The God who alone can make the corn grow is fully able to protect it, or to make ample provision in another way if it should be destroyed. The Sabbath reminds us that God is

"gracious and full of compassion" (Psalm 111:4).
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"Thus says the Lord: 'Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.'" (Jer. 17:21).

Note:

1. The Gospel in Creation, pp. 156-160.