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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

What is the use of the Sabbath?

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Reader, I ask your attention while I say a few words in reply to the question before your eyes. I do so as a friend of the Sabbath, and I hope I may truly say, a friend to your soul.

You live in days when many say, that the friends of the Sabbath are inflicting a positive injury on them in calling on them to keep the holy day. They talk as if the observance of the day was a heavy yoke, like circumcision and the washings and purifications of the ceremonial law! They rail at ministers of religion for defending the Sabbath, as if they only wanted it kept for their own selfish ends! They insinuate that our motives are not pure, and that we feel "our craft in danger." And all this sounds very plausible in the ears of ignorant persons.

Once for all, let us understand that all such statements are founded in entire misconception, and are rank delusions. The Sabbath is God's merciful appointment for the common benefit of all mankind. It was "made for man." It is given for the good of all classes, for the laity quite as much as for the clergy. It is not a yoke, but a blessing. It is not a burden, but a mercy. It is not a hard, wearisome requirement, but a mighty public benefit. It is not an ordinance which man is bid to use in faith, without knowing why he uses it. It is one which carries with it its own reward. It is good for man's body and mind. It is good for nations. Above all, it is good for souls.

The Sabbath is good for man's body. We all need a day of rest. On this point at any rate all medical men are agreed. Curiously and wonderfully made as the human frame is, it will not stand incessant work without regular intervals of repose. The gold-diggers of California soon found out that. Reckless and ungodly as most of them were—urged on as they were, no doubt, by the mighty influence of the hope of gain—still they found out that a seventh day's rest was absolutely needful to keep themselves alive. Without it they discovered that in digging gold they were only digging their own graves. I firmly believe that one reason why the health of working clergymen so frequently fails, is the great difficulty they find in getting a day of rest. I am sure if the body could tell us its wants, it would cry loudly, "Remember the Sabbath day."

The Sabbath is good for man's mind. The mind needs rest quite as much as the body. It cannot bear an uninterrupted strain on its powers. It must have its intervals to unbend and recover its force. Without them it will either prematurely wear out, or fall suddenly like a broken bow. The testimony of Mr. Wilberforce on this point is very striking. He declared that he could only attribute his own power of endurance to his regular observance of the Sabbath day. He remembered that he had observed some of the mightiest intellects among his contemporaries fall suddenly at last, and their possessors come to melancholy ends. And he was satisfied that in every such case of mental shipwreck the true cause was neglect of the fourth commandment.

The Sabbath is good for nations. It has an enormous effect both on the character and temporal prosperity of a people. I firmly believe that a people which regularly rests one day in seven will do more work, and better work, in a year, than a people which never rests at all. Their hands will be stronger. Their minds will be clearer. Their power of attention, application, and steady perseverance will be far greater. What two nations on earth are so prosperous at this day as Great Britain and America? Where shall we find on the globe so much energy, so much steadiness, so much success, so much public confidence, so much morality, and so much good government as in those two countries? Let others account for all this as they please. I say without hesitation that the grand secret of it all has been the observance of the Sabbath. Great Britain and the United States, with all their sins, are the two most Sabbath-keeping nations on earth. They

have given up seven years of good working days in the last fifty years to keeping the Lord's-day holy. But have they lost anything by it? No, indeed! *The two Sabbath-keeping nations are the most prosperous nations in the world.*

Last, but not least, the Sabbath is an *unmixed good for man's soul.* The soul has its wants just as much as the mind and body. It is in the midst of a hurrying, bustling world in which its interests are constantly in danger of being jostled out of sight. To have those interests properly attend to there must be a special day set apart. There must be a regular recurring time for examining the state of our souls. There must be a day to test and prove us, whether we are prepared for an eternal heaven. Take away a man's Sabbath, and his religion soon comes to nothing. As a general rule, there is a regular flight of steps from "no Sabbath" to "no God."

I know well that many say that "*religion does not consist in keeping days and seasons.*" I agree with them. I am quite aware that it needs something more than Sabbath observance to save our souls. But I would like such persons to tell us plainly what kind of religion that is which teaches people to keep no days holy at all. It may be the religion of poor corrupt human nature, but I am sure it is not the religion of Revelation. It is not the religion which tells us that we "must be born again," and believe in Christ and live holy lives. Revealed religion teaches me that it is not quite so cheap and easy a thing to go to heaven, as many now-a-days seem to fancy, and that it is essential to our soul's prosperity that in every week we give God a day.

Reader, I ask you to consider well what I have been saying. I believe, I have advanced nothing that can be fairly gainsaid. I believe that if every church and chapel were pulled down, and every minister of religion banished from this kingdom, it would still be an unmixed benefit for the nation: to preserve untouched the institution of the Sabbath, and an act of suicidal folly to part with it. Whether Englishmen know it or not, their Sabbath is one of their richest possessions, and the grand secret of their position in the world. It is good for their bodies, minds, and souls. Of it the famous words may be truly used, that "it is the cheap defence of a nation."

Reader, I ask you to consider not merely what I have been saying, but to act also. Be not misled by those who want to alter the character of our Sabbath. Use every lawful means to resist them. Regard the Sabbath as one of your greatest blessings, and strive to hand it down uninjured to your children.

"The Crusher and the Cross."

Is the title of a small work recently published in London, giving a narrative of the life of a prize fighter before and after his conversion. Although his mental powers were not of the highest order, yet he shewed the same simple earnestness for Christ after conversion that he did courage in his previous profession. The following example of his mode of usefulness is full of instruction:

"One of Jim's favourite ways of doing good was to 'twig a swell,' as he expressed it, i. e., to say something for Christ to any young gentlemen returning home from business. When such was his object, he generally found his way to some railway station about three or four o'clock in the afternoon."

Towards the fall of the year, Jim, as usual, loaded with goods, took his stand near a station lying a good way from London, among a number of villas occupied by city merchants. After much ejaculatory prayer while standing about, the well-known scream announced the arrival of a train, which was followed by a crowd of business gentlemen dispersing, bearing with them the everlasting black bag, or paper bag, or rush bag, to their respective homes. On this dispersing mass Jim's eye was fixed. To whom among them all am I sent by my Father? had scarcely escaped his lips when his attention was turned towards a young gentleman, "stately and handsome," struggling on the platform with a large black

dog. Jim intuitively whispered "That's my man," and made towards him, and, being very well acquainted with the nature of dogs, he assisted the gentleman in managing, quieting, and ultimately leading the dog to the gate of his master's house. After the young gentleman had handed over the dog to his servant, he turned towards Jim, complimented him on his knowledge of dogs, and offered him some money for his services on the occasion. To the surprise of the gentleman, Jim very politely refused.

Jim remarked with a smile, "And so you know my Master, sir?"

"Your master?" exclaimed the gentleman; "how should I know him? You are a perfect stranger to me."

"My Master knows you right well, sir, whether you know Him or His servant," replied Jim; "and I'm the bearer of a message from Him directed to you."

"You must be mistaken, my man," remarked the gentleman; "I neither know you nor your master. Who is your master? Is he in business in the city, or country, and what is the name of the firm?"

In answer Jim returned, "Yes, sir, He's in a large way—does large business in city and village; but manages His own business Himself; His is not a partnership concern—there's none but His own name above the door and on his bill-heads."

"Well, my young man," said the gentleman, looking at his watch, "as you'll take no reward for helping me with my dog, I can only thank you and go, for my dinner hour has arrived; and now your message."

"Sir," said Jim, the name of my Master is Jesus, and here is His message," putting into his hand a little book entitled, "Is it well with thee?"

The gentleman looked in Jim's face perfectly confounded, and began to move from the gate. "But, sir," continued Jim, "I was bidden to bring back an answer. What shall I say? Can I say it is well with thee?"

"O, my dear fellow," with a smile said the young man, "this is not the time to speak about these things; we do all that business on a Sunday."

"Yes, sir," retorted Jim, "but if you should not see Sunday, what then?"

"O, we must chance it," gaily replied the gentleman; evidently very much amused with the simplicity, originality, and earnestness of Jim.

"But sir," entertained Jim, "hear me once more. My Master's timepiece is always right; if this is not the right time for you to reply to His message, it's the first time I ever knew Him make a mistake. Believe me, He's always up to the mark, and never on any occasion sends His messengers on a fool's errand. Young man, answer that question now! Take it for granted that He did not take the trouble to send that message all the way from heaven, and poor Jim, his messenger, so many miles out of his beat, for nothing. That is the right time, and you're the right person. Again I ask you, in my Master's name, What shall I take back as your reply? That at this very moment it is well with thee?"

These words were pressed home by the Spirit of God with such earnest simplicity as to become irresistible. The gentleman solemnly replied, "It is not well with me; and my good fellow, it has not been well with me for some years back, and I often envy the happiness of the man that fears God; but—"

"There's no sux in the message, sir," replied Jim; "if it's not well with thee, it must be ill with thee."

For a moment the gentlemen in silence beheld Jim, and was evidently much moved. Laying hold of his hand, he, as it were, unwittingly drew him in at the gate, and Jim found himself sauntering along the garden-walk with the young man. After a few moments of deep mental agony, the young man exclaimed, "This is of God, my friend; my sins have found me out. I am a backslider; once I was a Sunday-school teacher; but, through the temptations of a prosperous business, I have been allured from the ways of God; and now I tremble to think of the past, and dare not look to the future. Ah, my friend, I would give my whole fortune to be again at peace with God." Here he relapsed into silence, and gave evidence of the most pungent sorrow.

Jim spent a portion of that evening with

him in reading the Scriptures and prayer. Shortly after this incident Jim had the indescribable pleasure of beholding the young man restored to the ways of holiness and peace.

"Thy Kingdom come."

Every body in this room has been taught to pray daily, "Thy Kingdom come." Now, if we hear a man swear in the streets, we think it very wrong, and say he takes God's name in vain. But there's a twenty times worse way of taking his name in vain than that. It is to ask God for what we don't want. He doesn't like that sort of prayer. If you don't want a thing don't ask for it; such asking is the worse mockery of your King you can mock him with; the soldiers striking him on the head with the reed was nothing to that. If you do not wish for his kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it. And to work for it you must know what it is; we have all prayed for it many a day without thinking. Observe, it is a kingdom that is to come to us; we are not to go to it. Also, it is not to be a kingdom of the dead, but of the living. Also, it is not to come all at once, but quietly; nobody knows how. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Also, it is not to come outside of us, but in the hearts of us; "the kingdom of Christ is within you." And being within us, it is not a thing to be seen, but to be felt; and though it brings all substance of good with it, it does not consist in that; "the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" joy, that is to say, in the holy, healthful, and hopeful Spirit. Now, if we want to work for this kingdom, and bring it, and enter into it, there's just one condition to be first accepted.

You must enter it as children, or not at all. "Whosoever will not receive it as a little child, shall not enter therein." And again, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Of such, observe. Not of children. I believe most mothers who read that text think that all heaven is to be full of babies. But that's not so. There will be children there, but the hoary head is the crown. "Length of days, and long life and peace," that is the blessing, not to die in babyhood. Children die, but for their parents' sins; God means them to live, but he can't let them always; then they have their earlier place in heaven; and the little child of David, vainly prayed for—the little child of Jeroboam, killed by its mother's step on its own threshold—they will be there. But weary old Barzillai, hallowed children's lessons at last, will be there too; and the one question for us all, young and old, is, have we learned our child's lesson? It is the character of children we want, and must gain at our peril.—*Ruskin's "Crown of Wild Olive."*

The Theatre.

Those who build and manage theatres, do so with the view of a good investment, and profitable employment. They know the tastes of their customers. They must either conform to their tastes, or lose money by opposing them. A theatre conducted on such principles as would make it safe to the morals of youth would not pay its proprietor. There are many enlightened and benevolent citizens who rear and maintain institutions which do not bear their own charges. They submit to loss from zeal for the public good; but these men never choose theatres as the instruments of elevating the community.

We scarcely know anything that would make us fear more for a young man, than to hear that he was in the habit of attending the theatre. We know that the practice, besides its own proper evil, would not long stand alone. A man cannot take fire into his bosom without being burned.

Does the impatient spirit of youth attempt to ward off our word by averring that we would smother the joys of the young under the gloomy cloud of religion? Oh, for a balance that could nicely discriminate the degrees of happiness that each enjoys! We would enter the competition with the merriest.