

WHAT SHALL WE DO ON SUNDAY?

(By The Rev. Charles Stelzle)

It is a question as to which falls farthest—the idle woman or the busy man. Satan, we are told, finds work for idle hands to do. But his mastery doesn't neglect the man who is working within the limit of endurance. The man who works incessantly is just as open to temptation as he who loaf's unduly. The grind becomes so—sometimes sudden, intellectually, he can neither think clearly nor concentrate. Life seems out of joint to him. His friends are misjudged and he makes enemies needlessly.

But this isn't the worst of it—the reaction that is likely to come from doing nothing but work often leads to the most animalistic of physical pleasures, leading to depths which the commonly idle never reach.

The man who hasn't taken a vacation in twenty years nor gone to a show in a year nor played in some other fashion cannot possibly have a normal mind nor a natural outlook upon the problems of life. He is either a hard master or a poor servant.

Now God took all these things into account when he commanded men to take one day's rest in seven. Even God Himself rested on the "seventh day" when He created the heavens and the earth. Besides this weekly day of rest He provided for a number of extra holidays and feast days. No doubt the Lord knew what he was about when he arranged things so that all men should enjoy a period of leisure at certain stated times.

Some people want to abolish Sunday—while others wish it were Sunday all the time. The first would use all the time for production and the latter would go to extremes in recreation.

Those who have tried to keep up an unlimited production have failed—nature insists on one day's rest in seven and the divine law commands it.

Sunday is a day when the physical, mental and spiritual faculties need to be recreated.

If the Sabbath was made that man might be recreated, then logically, whatever puts new life and vigor into a man—whatever stirs in him the best emotions without hurting anybody else—must be legitimate on Sunday.

What are some of the things that give us new life and vigor? Music does it for some people; looking at pictures does it for others; taking a walk through the woods helps many more; going to church builds up vast numbers.

It is hard for some people to understand that what may be wrong for them may be right for others.

If a man is conscious of wrong-doing, he is doing wrong. This is a principle in Scripture. But he must not insist that his neighbor, who can, for example, listen to an orchestra on Sunday afternoon with a clear conscience and with undoubted benefit, is doing a sinful thing.

The Puritans passed a law prohibiting a man from kissing his wife on Sunday. Some men do not need that kind of a law today to keep them from practicing this exercise. But the Puritans actually thought that it was sinful.

The divine command upon which the Puritans founded their anti-kissing law has not changed. But history has shown us that the Almighty has revealed to men a better way than that of observing the mere letter of the law with regard to Sabbath observance.

The time has come for a revision of our attitude toward the Sunday question. We are not going to cut out the command to keep the Sabbath whole. But we are going to reinterpret this law in the light of the modern situation—and this means, with a background of common sense.

The Sunday recreational problems of a big industrial city will never be settled by the people living in a country town or in farming communities because it cannot be understood by them.

It is one thing to have enjoyed the freedom of God's out-of-doors in the country, but it is quite another to have been shut up in a factory during six working days in the week, and to have slept in a stuffy tenement bedroom, wailing up every morning with a headache, because of the lack of ventilation.

It is a lot better to have working people go off for a Sunday excursion than to have them sweating and swearing at home because of the irritation of their surroundings.

The result is that the people get the impression that he is concerned only with crushing every natural impulse. And the assumption is that these natural impulses are necessarily bad. As a matter of fact, however, the devil hasn't a monopoly of all the good things in the world.

It is possible to teach a boy as much sound ethics in a baseball game as is taught in the average catechism class, provided that the game is played on the level—the value of "team play" or cooperation, the necessity for "sacrifice hits" in every day living, and the imperative need of clean living in order to be a good player, are just a few suggestions.

One of the big questions confronting us is that of "Sunday movies." In what respect do "Sunday movies" hurt a man?

They hurt him when the pictures are bad; they hurt him when he sees the pictures in a place where the air is bad; they hurt him when in order to see them he associates with people who are bad.

But what is objected to most strongly by the opponents of Sunday moving pictures is the commercial aspect of the business.

I sometimes wonder whether merely passing a quarter into a window at the entrance of a movie show is any worse than paying for a meal at the cashier's desk of a restaurant.

And for some people, seeing a good movie show on Sunday is just as beneficial as eating a meal—indeed some people get more benefit out of a high-grade motion picture than others get out of a Sunday dinner—frankly, I have seen motion pictures which had as fine a moral effect as many church services I have attended.

To close recreation centers on Sunday—whether they are concert halls, are galleries or libraries—merely because those who patronize them will not go to church is—to say the least—a sign of mighty poor sportsmanship on the part of churchmen.

The fairer thing to do is to make the church so attractive and appealing that men and women will see that it is better to go to church on Sunday than anywhere else, and this should not be a difficult thing to do, for, after all,

man's deepest and most fundamental need is the development of his spiritual life—and the church makes a specialty of furnishing that which satisfies this need.

It is the church's business to awaken a sense of that need.

THE KIND OF MAN WE NEED PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES

In Everybody's, for April, William Brewster Meloney, in writing of the kind of man we need for President, says: "The times call for a man as resolute as Washington, as patient as Lincoln, as modern as Roosevelt—a man who knows the facts of history; a man not to be surprised; a man who believes in the dignity of democracy; a man who can get on with men; a man who can take counsel and give counsel; a man who knows for a truth that no man builds alone; a man who hates injustice; a man who understands that the weak cannot be strengthened by destroying the strong; a man who knows that time is the essence of all human achievement; a man who knows that the distribution of wealth is a matter of economic and not statute law; a man who would risk being called a demagogue and not be a demagogue; a man who would risk being 'as revolutionary as science' or 'as reactionary as the multiplication table; a man whose word is a bond; a man who believes that work is a blessing and not a curse; a man who knows that poverty can be as predatory as wealth; a man who can be as simple as a little child with the simple, and as guileful as the devil with forces which would undo his country; a man who would try to have his country right in the eyes of mankind, but who will stand by his country, right or wrong, against all the world; a man who believes that the United States has rendered humanity a large service and has larger services to render; a man who believes in American institutions and who would sacrifice himself and all he possesses to preserve them; a man who will exact obedience to the law; a man who will not capitulate to clamor; a man without ears for the siren voices of special privilege and willful minorities; a man who contemplates our past not as a guttering lamp of failure, but as a blazing torch lighting the way toward the future, renewing faith in the fair destiny of a government for all of the people, by all of the people!"

The bolshevik in America number among their plans the destruction of all jails. They must hurry unless they expect to work from the inside.

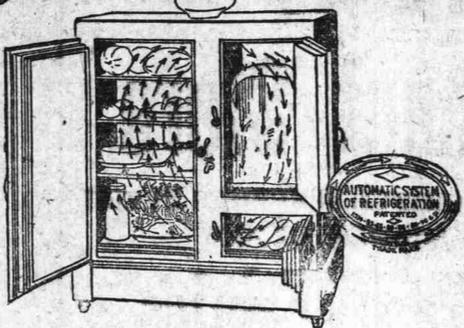
—Topeka State Journal.

FROM AN ENGLISHMAN
I am sure Americans do not realize that the most British thing they ever did was to rebel against and overthrow the tyranny of the English king and parliament in 1776.

—Maurice Hewlett.

See Jacob's ad in today's paper.—Adv.

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