

Sunday Reading.

FACTS FOR SABBATH-BREAKERS.

The following facts, from the North American Review, are very forcible in defense of the great Christian institution, the holy Sabbath. The writer speaks as one well informed on the subject: In 1789 the Revolutionary Government of France abolished the division of time into weeks, as well as the Sabbath, and the worship of God, and substituted a system of decades, that is nine working days succeeded by one day of rest. It is well known that this arrangement was an entire failure; the decades had to be abolished, and the week and Sunday were restored. An interesting illustration of the working of the decades occurs in one of the prize essays, "The Escape from Toil, or Workman's Weekly Refuge." The author of that essay was employed, in a shop in Paris. He worked beside Frenchmen of extraordinary industry, who never wasted a minute. One Saturday the Frenchman was regretting that he could not touch his work again till Monday. His British companion remarked in a joke, that he must have been far better off and made more money, in the time of the decades. "No," said the candid Frenchman, "quite the reverse. It is true I never allowed the Revolution to withdraw my attention from work: on the morning of the 10th of August, 1792, I crossed the Tuilleries on my way to work; and did not lose ten minutes in gazing at the mangled bodies of the Swiss guards. My employment suffered very little, if at all, from the Revolution; notwithstanding," exclaimed the man, "Sunday is the thing, after all that has been said or done. When there was no Sunday there was no working day. That tenth day was not obligatory, and the workshops were not shut up. We worked whenever we liked, but not one month of the whole time did I ever make a cent a bill as I do now, and did before. I was glad when the decades went to the dogs, and the weeks came round again. No, Sir, Sunday forever! When there was no settled holiday, there was no settled or solubles labor. I caught the infection of laziness, I suppose in some degree as well as the rest; at any rate, I got less money for my time."

A well spent Sabbath is invaluable for freshing up the energies of the mind, as well as the powers of the body. What a gloomy, melancholy thing would be the mere thought of a lifetime of unbroken, unceasing toil! The mere knowledge that the Sabbath intervening at the end of each six days, goes far to reconcile one to life of labor, and to keep up the spirits under it. But the actual enjoyment of a well spent Sabbath does much more—the pensive intercourse then enjoyed with the members of the family, and still more, the glorious fellowship which the pious workman then holds with heaven—the delight of looking forward to his eternal condition, and realizing that land, where "there shall be no more curse;" these things, being delightful in themselves, are of infinite service in giving vigor and energy to the mind.

These are the fountains, graciously provided at short intervals over your wilderness journey, from which you may draw refreshment and strength. Whatever employment needs constant activity—whatever mode of life, nothing is so indispensable as a weekly draught from the well-spring of a hallowed Sabbath.

A well-spent Sabbath promotes domestic affection. The members of the family have the opportunity on that day of being all together, and of cultivating one another's acquaintance. Nearly dressed in the Sunday clothing, and cleansed from the dirt that begins some of them during the week, their very appearance is better fitted to beget respect and affection. If the Sabbath did nothing more than encourage cleanliness it would be an important blessing. Self-respect is greatly promoted by the workman being able to turn out of a Sabbath morning with his dressed family, and fill their pew in the house of God. The respectful feelings of others are attracted to such a family. The workman feels that he is able to appear thus on the Sabbath, is something worth exerting himself for. His industrious wife feels the same. Both are reluctant to squander money and squander time, because of the effects of such extravagance will be to prevent them from appearing at church with their children. It is remarkable how closely the loss of Sabbath-keeping habits is connected with the loss of self-respect. When a man has no desire to appear decent with his children on the Sabbath, it may be presumed that his self-respect is gone, and it will be no easy matter to keep him from degradation and ruin.

A well-spent Sabbath furnishes moral energy against temptation and vice. The immense proportion of crimes that spring from neglect to the Sabbath is a well-known fact. Many criminals, when under sentence of death, or of transportation, have confessed that their career commenced by Sabbath desecration. The painter, Hogarth, so remarkable for his minute acquaintance with human nature, in his series of pictures illustrative of "The Rake's Progress," which ends at the gallows, introduced him as an apprentice playing at cards upon a tombstone during divine service. The Committee of the house of Commons, appointed in 1832, to investigate the subject of Sabbath desecration, remark in their report, that "Sunday labour is generally looked upon as a degradation; and it appears in evidence that in trade, in proportion to its disregard of the Lord's Day, is the immorality of those engaged in it." One of the witnesses examined, a respectable baker, declared he would hardly train up his children to the business, because he was afraid of their morals being

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Even our blessed Master entered upon His work through forty days' conflict in the wilderness. It was by the tears of repentance that Peter was prepared for his Pentecostal sermon. Saul of Tarsus went days and nights without food, afflicted with bitterness in his body and a horror of great darkness in his mind, as a preparation for his ministerial work. The church of Jerusalem was powerfully shaken by persecution, at the death of Stephen, before its seeds of truth were scattered abroad upon distant nations. It is the crushed plant that emits its fragrance; it is by being emptied from the vessel that the wine is separated from its sediment and becomes fit for use. So, God disciplines by sorrow and pain those whom He would render most successful in becoming good. If you are sympathizing with your Master in His temptation, if you are blinded, broken, bruised, if persecuted, maimed and dashed in all your worldly hopes, look for something better than all your former experience. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

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