

a rest-cure as well as a faith-cure; a time to refrain from working as well as a time to work, if so be a man is to conserve his energy and give, in the end, the best account of himself to God and his fellows. The every-day manual laborer needs it. The tradesman, and artisan, and man of affairs need it. The hard-pressed professional man needs it, and no one more than the faithful pastor and preacher.

The mental demands of the Christian ministry are such, in these days of higher education and the wide diffusion of intelligence, and the claims of the pastorate upon time, and nervous energy, and sympathy, and practical aid are such that head, and heart, and hand, alike are taxed to their utmost limit and imperatively call for relief.

No man has a moral right to be idle or indolent, but he is often under obligations to lay down his tools and rest.

Laziness is one thing, mental inactivity is another, while it is only the conscientiously busy man who has a right, when necessary, to do nothing and knows how to do it with good grace and profit.

There is such a thing as elegant leisure, as the real "*otium cum dignitate*," all the more dignified as he who indulges in it does so at the stern behest of an overtaxed brain. With the preacher, vacation should be absolutely sermonless. Going to the seaside or mountains with a valise full of sermons, prepared to preach, and rather expecting and desiring it, is not a pastor's vacation. It has far too much of the vocation in it to be such. Complete cessation from sermonizing is needed—if for no other reason, to arrest the current that flows steadily in one direction for ten or eleven months in the year, to open the mind and the eye to new thoughts and new scenes, and thus to refresh and renovate by a total change of view.

The poet Cowper is but partially right when he sings—

“Absence of occupation is not rest,  
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.”

Now and then, complete “absence of occupation” is a duty, and the more mind a man has and the fuller it is, the more essential is it that, sometimes, it should be “quite vacant.”

We note, as a final word, and as what the lawyers would call a saving clause, what, after all, both vacation and avocation are with ultimate reference to vocation. Change of service and occasional remittance of service are alike to be made contributive to the better execution of the chief business of life. Our vocation is our life. It is what we are, as well as what we do. It embodies and expresses our best selves. It is alike the end and joy of our being and, hence, all else must be made subservient thereto.

Recreation is re-creation, a making over of the inner and outer man by change of service and of rest. Intelligent, Christian activity is the law of life, and we close, as we began, with the laconic teaching of Carlyle: “The latest gospel in this world is, know thy work and do it.”