

Our Young People

REST: WORSHIP.

Topic for July 23: "HONORING THE LORD'S DAY."—Ex. 20: 8-11; Rev. 1: 10.

"The longer I live the more highly do I estimate the Christian Sabbath."—Daniel Webster.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

Honoring the Lord's Day.

By Woodford.

Topic.—The fifth commandment, which makes for the stability of home and national life, men do not complain of; nor of the sixth, which protects their lives; nor of the seventh, which promotes and preserves purity; nor of the eighth, which protects property. Why, then, should they complain of the fourth, which not only protects their rightful heritage, a day of rest, but the keeping of which is honoring to God and so elevating to man. Many arguments might be adduced for the keeping of this commandment. No arguments, no persuasion of man will avail effectually unless we be in the spirit on the Lord's Day; so taking the Sabbath of the Old Testament and making its counterpart in this dispensation a day for special communion with our risen and ever-living Lord. Then we shall delight to honor the Lord's Day, and find the Sabbath to be a delight—in making it to be a day of resurrection from earth to things above.

Monday.—For those who view things as did the writer of "The Revelation," lengthy arguments will be unnecessary; but not many have got so "far ben." It is only as one's frame of mind approaches that which was the beloved disciple's, that the Sabbath will be kept as it is here spoken of. It is indeed to be regretted that all cannot look upon it as a privilege, a delight; as honorable, to be able so to keep this day. How much such keeping of the Sabbath by a few, even here and there, makes for the extension of Christ's kingdom or for the development of robust Christianity and for growth in spirituality, we cannot know unless it has been our experience to have come in contact with some such. The 13th verse of this reading all ought to know as well as the fourth commandment.

Tuesday.—Cui bono? What's the use? What's the great good of keeping the Sabbath? The answer may be as pointed as any such questions. God meant it for our good. He knew how the tinsel and glitter of perishing things would fascinate us, making us to be wafers, wandering wistfully after will-o'-the-wisps, and from the beginning He appointed this day as that in which, apart from the rush and the worry of our working days, we might calmly take our bearings. What would happen a liner in mid-Atlantic if for several days the bearings were not taken, will, and does happen to those who neglect the Sabbath. The day was made for man to make use of it, not to abuse. As the vessel may plough the clear sea for days when no bearings are taken, so may many for years journey on neglecting the Sabbath; but what of the haven and abiding place that ought to be reached? There are death-dealing icebergs on the Newfoundland banks and a stern and rock-bound coast on the Atlantic sea-board, as well as land-locked bays, and safe harbors. It is good and absolutely necessary for us to lift our eyes from all that is so bewildering and pleading to the stars, to the hills, else we should wander and lose our way. It is said that the mules that work all week in the Pennsylvania mines are brought up to the light every Sunday to keep them from going blind.

Wednesday.—Here the Israelites are commanded to keep the Sabbath as a privilege that is theirs now as a free people. Many would be surprised if they were told that their neglect of Sabbath observance was not merely license, and not liberty, but that it meant that they were in grievous bondage. Just think of so many free-born (?) citizens in certain parts of the world, in their stores, offices, on the boats and trains, really being slaves, bondsmen. Mammon is a hard taskmaster, and wields a whip with a long lash. And yet there is something pathetically grand about such men, working so hard under, and enduring so long, the taskmaster's whip; what might they not do and be as sons and daughters of God—the truth having made them free.

Thursday.—No taskmaster drives us; no tyrant's law compels us, but the great leader of men by God's appointment has all in readiness, so that we may draw near with a true heart in all fulness, etc., to unitedly think of one another, and so stir each other up to love and good works. How few empty seats there would be if we thought of public worship in this way; congregational singing would be grander than that of \$15,000 a year quartettes of some of the New York churches; we should indeed pray in our prayers, and in the spirit on the Lord's Day, we should worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Friday.—There is no encouragement to laziness in God's Word, although there is ample provision for rest spoken of. "To spend such a day," says Dods, "in formal attendance at church, in yawning idleness that has not energy enough to think that God cannot possibly prefer that to honest hard work; to spend it in gossiping levity, in a weariness that kills dinner as the great event and real relish of the day—is a scandal to our common humanity."

Saturday.—"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; bring an offering and come into His courts." Two mites on one occasion meant a princely offering. How the parent values the sweetmeat kept by the child for his home-coming. A posie of the most common wildflowers from children one loves and who only thus can show their regard, may have an intrinsic value that far surpasses the intrinsic value of the bouquet of costly flowers sent from the florist's. It is Emerson who says: "The gift to be true must be the flowing of the giver unto the correspondent unto my flowing unto Him." Ye who would honor the Lord's Day, making it holy of the Lord, honorable; knowing its purpose, resting that day from the labor of the common days, engaging in public worship, and doing good, with your gifts give yourselves, consecrate yourselves afresh every Lord's Day to Him whose the day is, for a sacred Sabbath sanctifies life.

Nor Thy Cattle.

A gentleman who was passing some mines in Pennsylvania asked a little boy why the field was so full of mules. "These mules are worked in the mines through the week," replied the boy, "and they are brought up into the light on Sunday to keep them from going blind." The application is sufficiently apparent.

A French historian says that when the attempt was made, during the Revolution, to abolish the Sabbath, the peasants were accustomed to say, "Our oxen know when the Sabbath comes, and will not work on that day."

Letting the World Know.

The Christians have a very pretty custom in Corea of putting out the little white Korean flags over their houses on the Sabbath. These banners show just where there are Christians living, and they show the world that it is a holy day.

Force of Example.

A railroad conductor once went with a large company of conductors on an excursion to a Southern city. They arrived on Saturday night. An attractive trip had been planned for the next day. In the morning this gentleman was observed to be taking more than usual care with his attire, and a friend said to him: "Of course you are going with us on the excursion?"

"No," he replied, quietly; "I am going to church; that is my habit on Sunday."

Some comment on it began to pass around, and discussion followed. When he set out for church, he was accompanied by one hundred and fifty men whom his quiet example had turned from a Sunday excursion to the place of worship.

Keeping Track of the Days.

The well-known missionary to the South Seas, Rev. J. G. Faxon, tells of a visit to a solitary island in the Pacific, where he had not been for many years, and where he found (to his great surprise, for no missionary was there) that a certain reverent observance of the Lord's Day was kept up. He says:—

"Two old men, who had very little knowledge of the truths of the Scriptures, were keeping of the track of the days, and on the first day of the week they laid ordinary work aside, put on calico shirts kept for the purpose, and sat down to talk to those whom they could call about them, and, in a simple way, recited the outlines of a wonderful story they had once heard about one Jesus."

"I inquired where they had learned this truth, and they answered that, long before, a missionary had visited the island for a week or two, and had given them each a shirt, and had told them something of this story of Jesus. I asked if they could remember the name, and they said, 'Yes; it was Paton.'"

"Thirty-three years before, I had, in my evangelistic tour, stopped at this island for a few days, and here, so long after, was the fruit. The calico shirts had been worn but once a week, carefully preserved for the Lord's Day, and the only way to keep the day which they knew was to meet others and tell what they could remember of the wonderful story."

For Daily Reading.

Monday, July 17.—Holy of the Lord, honorable.—Isa. 58: 13, 14.

Tuesday, July 18.—Purpose of Sabbath.—Mark 2: 23-28.

Wednesday, July 19.—Rest from labor.—Deut. 5: 12-15.

Thursday, July 20.—Public worship.—Heb. 10: 18-25.

Friday, July 21.—Doing good.—Matt. 12: 1-13.

Saturday, July 22.—Lord's Day offerings.—1 Cor. 16: 1-4.

Sunday, July 23.—Topic. Honoring the Lord's Day.—Exod. 20: 8-11; Rev. 1: 10.

If I am to decide on a man's character, I desire to know nothing more than this: How are his evenings and his Sundays passed?—Anon.

The institution of Sunday, if it is to be maintained at all, will be maintained for the nobler purposes of the higher life.—Edward Everett Hale, D.D.