

Our Holidays

by F.B. Meyer

A Christian's summer holiday should be a time of spiritual refreshment, not just a break from daily life.

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 11:25, Matthew 11:28, Galatians 6:2, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Hebrews 13:16, James 1:17

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Kindness in Travel"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the necessity of taking holidays to rejuvenate our physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. He advises careful selection of travel companions who maintain a positive outlook and encourages bringing enriching books to stimulate thought. Meyer highlights the importance of considering others during travels and treating service staff with kindness, as this fosters a more enjoyable experience. He warns against losing spiritual vitality during vacations and suggests dedicating time for personal reflection and prayer. Ultimately, Meyer encourages integrating spiritual practices into our holiday routines to ensure a refreshing and meaningful break.

Transcript

WE need to have a pause in the rush of our life, whether by the seaside, on the moor, or in the green nook of the country. As nature needs the repose of winter after the exhaustion of her autumn produce to recuperate herself for the coming spring, so do we need seasons in which our intellectual and physical vigor, to say nothing of the spiritual, may be reinvigorated and renewed. Hence the need for summer holidays. There are certain directions, however, which we should bear in mind, if we would make the most of our annual vacation, which has come to be part of the yearly programme of most people.

Be careful with whom you travel. It is certainly remarkable how amiable people, for the most part, are when they are away from home; that is, if they have got their corner seat, are quite sure that their luggage is safe, and have got the first place for being served at the dining-table. These conditions being granted, it would seem as if the moment people leave their houses they put off all trace of peevishness and irritation, and array themselves in the brightest and pleasantest moods. The little child who asked his father, when going through a cemetery, where all the bad people were buried, might well ask where all the "ill-tempered people take their holiday. It has been observed that if you meet a party for the ascent of Snowdon, for a drive on a coach through the Highlands, or for a picnic arranged from a "Hydro," you will congratulate yourself on having discovered the most amiable of mortals.

But if you are planning to spend all the time with another or others in the same party, to share with them the jolts and mishaps, the ups and downs, which are incident to journeyings at home and abroad, you should be very careful whom you select. One who looks on the bright side of things, who is hopeful when the morning opens with mist or a downpour of rain, who can laugh gleefully over a misadventure, and enjoy contentedly the substitution of ship biscuits for ham sandwiches- in the luncheon-baskets, with such like mishaps; one who is capable of reverence amid the sublimities of nature, and who will not speak of the roseate hues of morning, or snow with evening pink, as "awfully jolly;" one who is capable of being quiet and hushed; one who, after the most gleeful frolic, can turn naturally to thoughts of God,--give me such a companion for my summer holidays.

Be careful to take a good book with you. There are many books which we cannot read in the rush of daily life. It is well to put one of these in the trunk; not, of course, a deep theological treatise, or Balfour's suggested basis for religious faith, or a manual of social and political economy, however closely it bears on the problems of the day. Apart from these there are books, interesting and suggestive, stimulating thought and quickening imagination, which we can read without fatigue, and to have read which will have made the holiday memorable. There are, for instance, books on natural investigation, works of history, biographies, the highest class of stories. These do not tax the mind unduly, while they give it that delicious sense of exercise which turns the current of the thought into new channels, and leaves a permanent possession of information and interest.

Be careful to think about other people. I am beginning to see that the people who are always making for the best seats do not on the whole fare better than those who wait their time. In any case, the scheming and pushing, the rushing and dashing, the fever and excitement, the uncomfortable sense of having acted selfishly, must deprive selfish folks of the power of tranquil enjoyment. To think about other people is to do the best for yourself. Perhaps if you look after the luggage of that nervous traveller, you may find your own in the van; if you give up your comfortable corner for that little child to go to sleep in, it is as likely as not that the angels who watch it will contrive to put you into a sound slumber; if you will see to others getting refreshment, you will probably think less of your own hunger and fatigue, and there will be your share of the twelve baskets full of fragments. It is remarkable how often a kindness done to a stranger will open his heart, secure you a friend who will show you interesting views of the country through which you are passing, and which you must otherwise have missed.

Be polite and courteous to the servants and natives. I have seen disgraceful things. I remember a Saturday night in Norway, where the people of a quiet inn were preparing decorously for the succeeding day, that a rowdy party of young Englishmen came in and demanded drink, behaved ruddy to the modest servant-girls, shouted boisterously to each other, and turned the place into a bear-garden. With what little humanity do many tourists treat the tired servants of the hotels or inn! How vulgarly they speak to the people they meet on the roads, discussing their manners, and commenting on their ways! What a conception must be given of the average life of English people! More fond of a good dinner than of a fine view, inclined to wrangle over their bills, imperious in their demands, certain that money will secure them a right of entrance anywhere. On the other hand, kind words and little courtesies cost nothing, but, like oil, ease the axles.

Be specially careful that the summer holiday should be a time of spiritual refreshment. A Christian man confided to me the other day his regret that he generally came home from his summer vacation worse spiritually than he started; and that it took him several weeks to regain the old position. This arises partly from the occupation of our mind with the outward, with the fresh scenes and people; and thus our energy

is diverted from the interior and eternal.

Then our habits of private and domestic prayer are liable to be broken in upon by the early morning start and the late, tired return. We are compelled to spend our time in the presence of others; and the larger the party, the more impossible to get alone. Then there is the temptation to let Ourselves go into lightness of speech and act, partly induced by the exhilarating air, and partly by the flow of high spirits around. From all these causes we are liable to lose the fine tone of our spiritual life, and to get jaded.

To counteract these influences we must get our half-hour, or hour, alone with God and our Bible, though we rise a great while before day. We should have our pocket Bible at hand, that we may turn to the Psalms or the Prophets, as the divine comment on nature. And it is well to be provided with some helpful devotional book, the reading of which will direct our aspirations towards God and heaven.

To me the vacation is generally associated with reading a book or books of the Bible thoughtfully, trying to see deeper into them than before; and for many years I have read the Book of Revelation though at that time. There is a special congruity between the splendor of its conceptions and the vision of ocean, sky, and mountain. It is well, when we have witnessed the dawn of some new revelation, as well as of the morning; the great deep of God's judgments, as well as the ocean; the mountains of his righteousness, as well as Snowdon, Cader Idris, or Mont Blanc.

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