

why does one go to church.

Last Sunday I said that the perfection of
of a living thing rests in its growing,
incorruptness, that the perfection of society
rests in its growing incorruptness, and
that the aim and ~~but~~ ^{the} purpose of its
individual members is the service
that it can render to the uncompleted
growth.

It seems strange then, that if
the glory of life rests in the service
that can be rendered, that we should
deliberately set aside one day in seven
in which to relax from the service,
to rest, and devote ourselves to things
which seem quite apart from the activi -
ty avenues through by which we
render our greatest service to the
community in which we live.
Why do we forget these duties, why do

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ever neglect the simple duties of our former, and come to church for an hour or two, of worship? Is it not true that such a thing course of conduct is a gross inconsistency? Are we not deceiving ourselves by this day of rest, and this hour of worship? Is not our apparent ~~to~~ day of rest and hour of devotion a wholly unnecessary thing, a mere fiction under which we avoid cover, our weak desire to shirk the duties of service to which our unconfessed ideal calls? Why does one take a day of rest? Why does one go to church?

These questions are not asked in any trivial way, because their answer is of importance. If the day of rest and hour of worship are really necessary things in our lives, think of

the vast amount of precious time that is wasted in this clergys? Think of how much of service might be done in the 52. or 53 days, that are given up to rest, and the several days that are given up to worship!

There are many who believe that the ~~more~~ value and the usefulness of the church is fast, that it is now upon the wane, and in time it will become unnecessary to all as it is now unnecessary to many. They hold that it is an institution which rests upon the imperfections of humanity, and that as rapidly as those imperfections ~~exist~~ are overcome, the usefulness of the church ~~is~~ has passed, and the institution itself will disappear.

~~Book~~ ⁴ The loss of moral power, the relaxing
grip of the church upon people to day they
point to as evidence, and convincing
evidence of the decay and death of
an institution which has done a noble
service, and is being left behind - a
monument to the past, and a witness
of growth.

In fact we might go even beyond
that. I do not wish to be a defender
of a useless institution. If I could
see that its usefulness had failed,
I would never darken the door of this
building again, yet my very presence
here bespeaks my affection of the church.
Bespeak my faith that the church
rests, not upon the sins and weakness
of human nature, but upon its growing
and developing strength. Yet we
cannot in justice to ourselves and

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to society of which we are a part
made such considerations as they
put before us, and cover of the weak-
ness of our decaying fortresses by cant
and fivous phrases.

Not only is the usefulness of the church
wearing, but a large part of its
functions have long since been delegated
to other institutions. The time was
when the church was the central agent
of education, when all the training —
~~large part of the training~~ was the children
were educated by the church. When our
universities were in the hands of clergymen,
and the institutions existed as
a part of the ecclesiastical system, and
as a means for furthering the interests
of the church. This method of function
of the church is still retained in some
countries, and to some extent it is
in evidence in this country. —

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But in this country, education has passed
from the hands of the church. The two
systems are entirely distinct, and so
much euphemis has been placed upon the
separation, that the church ~~hardly~~
~~does~~ care hardly show any a healthy
and vital interest in the situation of the
schools without rousing opposition.

So be sure the church as has in its
Sunday Schools a small apology for
its ancient function. But education
today is in the hands of the state,
and the church has nothing to do
organically with the state.

But one step worse, the church
~~stands~~ is often made that the
church was once the oracle of wisdom.
From its ~~feet~~ the truths of ~~the~~ ^{the} truth
are. But in its function as the center
of culture, refinement, and vanity

other activities, the press has made great
inroads. Books, are in every household,
Papers bring each morning and evening
to us the news from all over the world.
The magazines discuss with wisdom
and keenness all the burning problems
of the day. We are aware of all that
goes on, and we find in our books
the treasures of literature, the gems of
the ages. The works of poets, prophets
and sires men can ever before us,
in better form, and in more impartial
statement, than we could ever hear
from the fayfit.

One step with this that, The church
was at one time the chief center for
administering those little benevolences
by which we seek to alleviate the
needs of unfortunate people, and
rest for the sick, and ~~and~~ ^{care for} the

fatherless. But that is fast passing into
other hands. Various organizations of
for fugitives of that sort, & are now
in full working order, and in no
way organically connected with the
church. People who are in a very assoc-
iated with the church, make very much
of the working force of the charitable
societies, but the church as such has
no directive influence.

So you see the church people who
look upon the church as a decaying insti-
tution, have very good evidence to support
their claims. One by one its functions are
being delegated to other institutions,
and in time the church will be left
behind because it is a useless
institution.

Now there are the facts upon which
such conclusions are based, and

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they are facts, and while they distract
and disengage many, they produce
quite the opposite effect upon me.
I rejoice in them. They are evidences
of progress. the milestones which
mark the growth, and development
of the world. It is a great evidence
of progress when people have become
so interested in the problem of
education, as to take it out of the
hands of the comparatively few
clergymen, and take hold of it
themselves. It is a wonderful step
in advance when men and women
so interest themselves in books
and the great thinkers and writers
as to read them, and work never-
say the interest ³ Robbie Library.
It is a great witness to the spirit of

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human interest in our fellow men when
the public a large takes into its hands
the work of caring for unfortunate
and the poor and needy. In these
things I rejoice because they are
they the emblems of a broadening,
developing interest in the ~~deaf~~ things
that make life rich and noble.

But you will go on to point out
that while these facts are emblems
of general progress, they tell a sad
tale for the church. On the contrary
they perfect its growth, and development,
they point to its coming to its own.
One would nearer the time when
the church can perform the function
which is its own function. One
would nearer the time when the
church can be an institution of morality.

where it can exert upon its duty of ⁴⁴
transforming truth into life.

However obscure and undignified
may be the origin of our Sunday, and
our day of service of worship, it rest
not upon the limitations, and weaknesses of
~~growing~~ human nature. But upon its dignity
and worthiness; and powerful
characteristics.

Back in the early days of Jewish
history, when the uncultured, uneducated
tribes were wandering about the lands
of the East, there developed among them
the custom of festival days. Perhaps it
originated in this way. They may have
been without food for a long
time, and then suddenly they were
able to procure a great quantity
and the entire tribe come together

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to enjoy the feast which ~~the~~ was
in this way ~~of~~ spread before them
to satisfy their wants, "at least the
three great feasts of Judaism bear witness
of referring to such an origin. The feast
of weeks is a harvest festival, and the
feast of Tabernacles, or is also the feast of
Tabernacles, and the feast of the Passover
recus witness of being the rejoicing over
the spring time, when the lambs are
down and flushed of new vigour
is at hand."

Even in the records that we have
of the day narration of parts of these feasts there
does not escape us some of the spirit
of joy and good fellowship, that takes
possession of a body of people at such
a time. "Ibn shall rejoice in thy
feast, thou and thy son, and thy
daughter, and thy maid-servant,

and the Levite, the syriener, the fetherden,¹²
and the widow within thy gate."

The festival was to be a great glorification
a great, ^{rejoicing}, where all differences of opinions
all distinctions of poverty, were to be cast
aside, all indiscrimination was to be
affiliated, and these untaught children
of God were to give them selves up to the
rich and dazzling power of human
fellowship, which takes forevermore of
men, when they come together in the
fellowship of fertility. This early
festival of ~~the~~ people of the plains
were not without incident which
we would no longer would tolerate.
But they were a step of progress. They
children of the wild had tested
the great in intricacies of overformality
and all controlling power that bated
each individual into its ~~for~~ grasp.
And since so long as along in its

tremendous on placing irresistible ¹⁴
strength, as the wind takes the particles
of dust and carries them where it will.
Who has not felt the power of this
domination of the multitude over
the individual. We feel it as we
walk the streets of a crowded city at
night, when ~~when~~ ^{and} ~~young~~ ^{smiling} ~~amazing~~
sullen spirit of care free, pleasure seeking
light hearted takes possession of us. and
even amid the throng of strangers we
feel the power of the multitude over us.

It is the same power that comes
the assaulter arrayed with the very fire
of death, and transforms the thousand
~~individuals~~ death fearing, self seeking
men, into one army dominated by the
spirit of self sacrifice, and devotion
to country home and liberty. Who
ever has tasted the inspiration that

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fills the man's soul when he is once
within this fellowship of men, drawn
together by a common purpose, has felt the
need of human nature upon which these
days of festival and among the ancient
Hebrews were founded. Not upon weak-
ness, not upon sins, limitations, and
imperfections, but upon the genuine
consciousness of fellowship rests this
institution of a festival day.

In the ~~process~~ ^{course} out of these natural
and necessary, but ever increasing days
of festivity, there gradually evolved
a fixed and permanent order of festival
days, and this system has been handed
down to us in our custom of setting
aside one day in seven as a day of
festival relaxation and rest.

But you ask how come it to be

a day of religious interests. The rude and unlettered tribesmen did not overlook the fact that, out alone though his own exertions did the infinite crops, and the multifarious of animals which made possible the days of feasting and rejoicing became fainter. But every where he was over come by the wondrous mysteries of nature, and life. The water springing up out of the ground, where he waded his saurianies, the tree growing up in the desert wastes of the desert place, where he found rest, and refreshment from his gleaning; thirth, ^{an} the mountain tops there he found the sun mystery, and in the moon which shone by night and the sun which shone by day, he saw the analogy of the great unseen former of the universe, whom he called Jehovah.

Johnson was with him at these feasts
and entered into the fellowship of the
joyous festivities, and for the joy of
his Johnson, he killed and sacrificed
animals, and burned and offered
~~burnt~~ offering, and formed between
ruler and into Johnson, the things
which Johnson would render him to him.
Thus through nature, the Hebrew came
to God, and entered into fellowship with
him, and the festive day became not
one of mere human fellowship, but a day
of fellowship with Johnson.

But one more element was yet to be
added to make the spirit of this festive
system complete. In the days of David's
genuine prosperity, when she had settled
down in Canaan, and under Sol. David
and Solomon the Kingdom was established
and Israel became a nation; yet even

idea we to find its way into her mind.
Through outer Israel had come to God, but
under the Kingdom we find the emanation
of another idea that had been growing.
Through outer Israel should come to God,
The Kings, and great leaders, who had
brought Israel to its greatest prosperity,
came to be regarded as the anointed
one, the chosen one of Jehovah to do
his bidding, and lead his Israel
into greatness, and power. Thus it happened
that they might joyfully reflect unto
Jehovah, who through the hand of David
had lead them to such prosperity, they
established by degrees the temple service
in which they rendered unto Jehovah
the honor and adoration that they felt
for his overwhelming majesty, just
as to David the joyful courage
and obedience. They had come out

only to feel a sense of fellowship with this ¹⁹
miserable form of the world, but they still
acknowledged their dependence upon his
overpowering greatness,

The forms were crude, the symbols mere
often gross. But beneath the forms and the
symbols, which developed into the institution
of the sabbath, and an hour of worship,
and upon which these institutions rested
then as they rest to day, were two great
fundamental ~~-~~ truths of humanity.
The first is this consciousness of fellowship
with each other, and of fellowship with the
source and author of all the mystery of
truth, goodness, and beauty, which has
sanctified the human soul since man
first gazed with wonder and admiration
upon the glories of the world.

The second truth upon which this institution
of the Sabbath Seminary worships etc. is
this, that one and above that great

force of coming through nature to god, it²⁰
the inherent feeling of man, that through
man we come to god, that by the moral
intellectual, and spiritual force of man,
we come to man man and man of the mystery
and the deep things of life and the world.
and hence by moral, intellectual, and
spiritual communion, ~~under the one~~
upon things that are concerned in deepest
and most subtle relations of man to man,
and man to god.

After these two eternal and imperishable
needs of the human soul, the fellowship of
man with man, and the fellowship of man
with God, sets this great institution
which is the sabbath, and an hour of
worship. You ask why we come to church,
why we meet for an hour of worship,
and I can only say that we must, our
very divine human nature bids us
come here or else where for this

communion of the spirit.

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But all through the centuries this festivity of this festival day, and the form of the service of worship has gone through a process of modification. Many things which belonged to the duties and ceremonies of the days of the Lord of the Sabbath are now relegated to other the duties of the week. The killing of animals for food was once a part of the religious service, and performed by the priests, but we have left that out of our service to day. The harvesting of the grain was once connected with the religious service; but it is no longer. Exchequer was once the part of the religious service, but it is no longer, and is fast freeing itself from its organic relation of the church. Philanthropy was once a part of the religious service, but now it is severing itself from its relation with the church, and worship.

The church is coming to its own, to its function
of filling our souls with that great over-^{22.}
spirit of truth, goodness, and beauty, which is
in and through us all. We come here, each
from his own peculiar clothes, his own peculiar
work, his own peculiar problems, victories
and disappointments; we come here each
with our own past of experience, but our
misdeeds, his own hopes, and aspirations.
~~We do not mind them.~~ We come here that together
we may bring into the presence of God that
spirit in us which ~~was~~ has been in the
soul of every true and noble child, which
has filled the soul of poet, prophet, and lover of
life since man has breathed. Here in the
presence of that great living incarnation spirit
of truth, goodness, and beauty, we enter into
the fellowship of that spirit. Here in this
common meeting place, to which we have
brought the dead lifeless facts, and truths
of life, we await - the power of that
spirit of fellowship, and dependence.