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An American Sunday

Earl Clement Davis

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AnnAmerican Sunday.

At the Sunday Evening Service Jan . 16, Rev. Earl C. Davis of the Church of Our Father took for his theme the much discussed topic of "What Shall we Do with Sunday?" In the course of his ~~address~~ sermon he called attention to the fact that most of the current discussion entirely misses the real point at issue. Sunday is no different than any other day in the week or the year. Its significance arises not from its origin, or the supposed divine sanction, but to the purposes for which it is used.

Historically it is very old. It probably came to us through from Babylonia through Judaism. Where and when it developed no one knows. Nor does it matter. In its nature Sunday, whether the Christian Lord's Day, ~~was called~~, or the Hebrew Sabbath it matters not, represents one of the first great conquests of man in his evolution from the animal to the civilized human being. From the point of view of history it means that in the process of evolution man arrived at a point where he had gained sufficient knowledge of the ways and laws of nature, and sufficient desire to know the meaning ~~and history of~~ of life, God and destiny of man, so that he could afford to set aside his a day now and then in which he felt himself free from the pressure of hunting after food and shelter. In time he came to have one day in seven devoted to other purposes than hunting or tilling the soil. He had earned a day of rest. While that was accomplished certainly not less than 3000 years ago and probably goes back several thousand years earlier than that, yet in Pennsylvania a good many of our citizens in the steel industry still work seven days in the week and 12 hours per day.

The point is that reserve power over nature sufficient to give mankind one day in seven for rest and recreation makes a great gain in evolution.

One of the great standards by which the real character of a nation or a generation is measured is by the use that is made of the hours of recreation. Three centuries ago ^{three} ~~two~~ great nations were contending for control in this western world. One was Spain. Its method of using spare time, leisure, recreation hours is illustrated by the bull fight, the Sunday sport of the nation. Spain has left a trail of failure and decadence in the western world. France was another contestant. France lost out both in Europe and the New World. Read her story in the wanton living, the animal like life of her cultured classes before and since the French revolution.

Today our light headed and ignorant men make fun of the Puritan, the Plain folk of the central states and others. Yet it was because our ancestors realized that there was something more to life than the mere task of getting something to eat. They gave their leisure to study, to conversation, to improvement, to the development of an intellectual and moral standards. The building of colleges, of universities, of churches,-- that was their investment of leisure. They believed that life had meaning beyond mere pleasure.

Now the real question at stake in this Sunday business is not whether we play Base-ball on Sunday or not, but whether we have left behind the big and noble conception of life that our fore-bears brought to these shores, and through which they achieved, under God, as great a nation as man has yet known. There are a lot of people whom we all know, who are profiteering in business, and they are profiteering in social relations as well. They expect all the high standards to be maintained, they expect to be protected from robbers and murderers, from fire pestilence, and invasion. They ^{squeal} ~~howl~~ like swine just as soon as their own safety is endangered, or their own pleasures or whims are interfered with. Such people never take any

share of the work or the real great pleasure that comes to people who find the greatest stimulus to life in working to leave a better, ~~and~~ more intelligent ~~is~~, more intelligent than they found.

It is not a question of going to Church or staying home. It is not a question of playing golf or not playing golf. It is right and altogether good and wholesome that we should have these fine Sunday out door recreations. Personally I would like to see a theatre running on Sunday afternoon, provided it produced good plays. I wish that we had more wholesome recreation. Also I would like to see people going to Church on Sunday. I believe it is important. I am bound to say that I think we might have more real and vital religious services than we do. But even so, I believe and would like to see more people go to Church, for, however much the Churches may have fallen down in their task, yet they stand for a great need in human ~~is~~ life, and have a great task to perform. The real great question is What does life mean? Are we simply the small potatoes that are left in the field to rot, or are we real worth while men and women, who are doing something more than squandering the accumulated re-sources of mankind.

Are you for a high standard of living or a cheap standard? That is the issue. Your life, your use of leisure classifies you for all time. It is not a sin to play a game of bill on Sunday. But it is a crime to undermine one of the greatest achievements of human history, the savings bank of time, a day to be devoted to the improvement and betterment of life.

An American Sunday

E. C. Davis

January 16, 1921

Lancaster, PA

At the Sunday Evening Service January 16, Rev. Earl C. Davis of the Church of Our Father took for his theme the much discussed topic of What Shall we Do with Sunday? In the course of his sermon he called attention to the fact that most of the current discussion entirely misses the real point at issue, Sunday is no different than any other day in the week or the year. Its Significance arises not from Its origin, or the supposed divine sanction, but to the purposes for which it used.

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