

Exposing the
hypocrisy in emily
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Losing My Religion: Exposing the Hypocrisy of Religion in Emily Dickinson's "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church-" Who does society consider the faithful? Is it the man on the street corner screaming for everyone to repent their sins before the apocalypse? Is it the zealot who straps a bomb to his body, and walks into a crowded marketplace? Is it the monk who renounces all his worldly possessions, and takes refuge in a monastery? While these may be extreme examples of the faithful, they all have one thing in common; they are conveying their devotion in their own way. It doesn't matter who people choose as their god, be it Allah, Buddha, Jesus or Vishnu.

The one common aspect of every religion is that you worship. Congregations around the world are supposed to prove their faith by worshipping at their local synagogue, church, or mosque. A place of worship can be a huge monstrosity of a building, or a small clapboard house in the middle of a cornfield. It doesn't matter where you worship, what matters is that you be present to worship. In Emily Dickinson's poem, "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church-"; the speaker conveys her faith and devotion in God by communing with nature, therefore creating her own church at home.

By juxtaposing the solemnity of worship with the natural beauty of one's backyard, Dickinson questions the hypocrisy of conventional religion. The first quatrain sets the tone for the poem: Some keep the Sabbath going to Church- I keep it, staying at Home- With a Bobolink for a Chorister- And an Orchard, for a Dome- (1-4)The first word of the poem is a slight to society; the "Some" in question are the people who feel they must abide by society's conventions, and attend church to exhibit their piousness. Hypocrites and doubters attend church because it is what is expected of them, and they

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must maintain the facade. In this one word Dickinson is able to illustrate how "Some" people buckle under the pressure of conformity. The first two lines of the stanza create a chiasmus, emphasizing the "going" of the people and the "staying" of the speaker. The people who attend church for the mere formality of it are actually giving away some of their faith, but by staying at home and truly living with God, the speaker is keeping something for herself.

Dickinson's utilizations of perfect rhyme and the capitalization of "Church" and "Home", further underline the speaker's belief that her home is all the church she needs, and that she doesn't have to leave the confines of her home to prove her faith. The speaker demonstrates her devotion to God every hour of every day, not just on Sundays. In the second quatrain Dickinson contrasts the opulent with the simple: Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice I just wear my Wings- And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church, Our little Sexton-sings. (5-8) In the first line of the stanza, Dickinson application of alliteration and capitalization underscores the importance of the words "Some", "Sabbath" and "Surplice". Once again the hypocrites and non believers are participating in a performance, except now they are taking it one step further by wearing their hallowed robes to exemplify their righteousness. The speaker does not need to dress in sacred garments to communicate her virtuosity; she is perfectly happy with what God has given her.

The speaker understands that a person's outward sanctity must coincide with their inner self, without sincere conviction there is nothing. Dickinson applies perfect rhyme to the second and fourth line of the poem: "Wings" and "sings" are brought together to stress the speaker's freedom with her <https://assignbuster.com/exposing-the-hypocrisy-in-emily-dickinsons-some-keep-the-sabbath-going-to-church/>

faith. Dickinson accentuates this point even further by placing a period at the end of the word " sings". The third and final quatrain conveys the speaker's belief that she does not need to meet her maker to enter Heaven, but that she is already living Heaven on earth: God preaches, a noted Clergyman- And the sermon is never long, So instead of getting to Heaven, at last- I'm going, all along. (9-12) Notice the word " getting" in the third line; this is another slight to the charlatan's who are making their attempts of " getting" into Heaven.

The truly faithful do not have to try to get into Heaven, they know they are going. Not only does the speaker know she's " going", but she is so blissfully content in this belief, that she has already found God's heaven in her own backyard. Dickinson' once again emphasizes her point by using a period at the end of the poem. There is no question that the speaker is a true believer, and there is no question as to where the speaker is going when her time comes.

She is going to Heaven, period. At first glance the poem's utilization of harmonious language and perfect rhyme create a pleasant image, but look closer and the reader is able to detect the critical analysis that is slowly revealed. Dickinson is able to create a poem that on the surface seems airy and light, but her clever use of alliteration, capitalization, and word choice divulges a different story. The poem's form coincides with the poem's topic and content; all is not what it seems. Society must look past their exterior, and one must be introspective to have faith.

One must remember the significance of the journey not the destination.

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