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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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Succoth, 1917.

S-17

1917

THE ROGERS

ABSOLUTELY FIRE PROOF
EUROPEAN PLAN
EVERY ROOM WITH PRIVATE BATH.

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MANAGER.

WHEELING, W. VA.

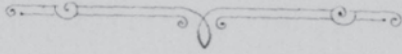
~~Sep~~ Oct. 1, 1917.

Mother Earth.

It is a significant fact that three of the principle religious festivals of Judaism are nature festivals: Passover, the Feast of Spring, Shebush, the Feast of Weeks - the feast of the early harvest, and Succoth, otherwise known as the Feast of Ingathering, ^{the Harvest Festival} each festival is ^{directly} immediately associated with the changes of seasons ~~and~~ ^{or with} the soil and its produce. It is true ~~that is false~~ In primitive Israel all festivals were nature festivals. Immediately following its nomadic stage, Israel entered upon an agricultural career. Its

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life was then closely ^{bound up with} related
to and most directly affected
by the varying fortunes & cha-
racter. Religion, ^{therefore} which is ~~always~~
the expression of the life of a people
was then intensely naturalistic.
The life and the needs of the
primitive Semites ~~also~~ deter-
mined ^{also} the nature and charac-
ter of his deity. God was the
God of nature. ^{as the word signifies} Yahweh was
the god who causes to be the
god who creates physical nature.
The festivals were then celebra-
tions of the important epochs
or crises in nature: the
~~coming of Spring which meant~~
~~so much to an agricultural~~
~~people was celebrated by~~

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the Fast & Spring, known to
us as Passover. The harvest
season by the Fast & Weeks
~~and Regathering~~ ~~White~~. It
is true that later Israel
endowed these purely nature
feast with ethical, historical
and moral import. It made
the Passover commemorative of
the Exodus. The birth became
the anniversary of the Revela-
tion ~~at~~ ^{on} Mt Sinai and Succoth
was decked in the new garb des-
criptive of the great compassion
of God in sheltering the children
of Israel in their wanderings
through the wilderness. This
new interpretation given to the
old festivals is the unique

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product of the prophetic genius
of Israel. It marks a decided
advance over the older and
cruder religious concepts. ~~These~~
~~the~~ ^{the} festivals which in their
original forms were utterly
devoid of any moral signifi-
cance were now re-interpreted
^{in such a way} ~~as~~ to function in the
moral life of the people.
But the original character of these
festivals was never entirely
obscured. As long as Israel
dwelt on its own soil and
derived its strength and sus-
tenance from the bounteous
gifts of mother earth, these
festivals were bound to
retain their ^{quality} ~~pristine~~ ~~natures~~

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As long as Israel lived in
his own land, ^{three yearly} The ~~annual~~ ^{yearly} pilgrimages to Jerusalem never
ceased. The offerings of the
yield of the soil ~~was~~ ^{where} still
~~looked upon~~ ^{regarded} as the truest
token of gratitude to the Him
who sent the rain and the
dew in season. "who prepareth
rain for the earth, who maketh
grass to grow upon the mountains"
who crowns the year with His
goodness and whose footsteps
drop fruitfulness". It was
only after the people was exiled
from its home and driven
from its native soil, after
centuries of wandering, ^{and}
ghetto dwelling, of ~~darkness~~

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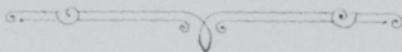
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that ^{the} nature-character of these
festivals was fairly lost sight
of. It remained as a dim
recollection of a ^{once} ~~once~~ glorious
past. Surely for the feverish
uncertainty of his life, the
banalities of the mart and
the rials, the darkened seven-
tine alleys, his ghetto ^{and} the
gloomy houses and the ^{abuse} ~~lack~~
and picnics, a world
of ~~uses and machinery~~ ^{stifled}
the soul of Israel ^{and sapped} ~~deprived~~ him
of ~~the~~ ^{his} ~~love~~ ^{apprecia-}
tion of the beautiful in nature;
~~and so too his life in~~
~~an urban and artificial~~
~~civilization.~~

But when the ghetto-walls
crumbled before the ^{onset} ~~onset~~ of the

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Progress and light and sun-
shine flooded the homes
of the children of Israel, when
Israel came out into the
wide world of freedom and breathed
deeply of the ~~fresh~~ ^{free} air, and
the the ~~sure~~ of the beautiful
~~spring~~ ~~door~~ latent within him
through centuries of darkness,
quickened to life again.
Then the psalmist his soul
was again attuned to the
harmonies of nature. Then
his the ~~heart~~ ^{lyric soul} of the ancient
psalmist who ~~expressed~~ ⁱⁿ
nature and its ~~mood~~ ^{is}
that classic psalm 104
~~or on that~~ ^{after the spirit} the
poet who sang of love and

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truths to teach us, if we could
but hearken unto them.

^{PP} In no uncertain terms ^{does} ~~to~~
~~they~~ ^{these festival of success} remind us that the
great world of God about us
is rich with promises of happi-
ness and full of beauty that
sanctifies life. ^{It} ~~they~~ beckons
us ~~out into the~~ to return
to nature and to the natural,
to be at one with the ^{spirit} ~~strength~~
of the universe. ^{PP} The natural
in life has often been mis-
construed. Some and especially
~~of some philosophic schools~~ ^{the Rousseau school} of the
eighteenth century looked upon
the ~~very~~ primitive state of
man as the natural one and
therefore the ^{one} ~~most~~ sublime happiness
of life.

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life, and ^{were frequently} could very well be the
~~habodes~~ ^{abodes} of malevolent demons
and spirits. He had no more
appreciation for the beauties
of nature than has a starved
~~beggar~~ ^{beggar} vagabond whose thoughts
are entirely concentrated on ^{plans} ~~store~~
for ^{the immediate relief of} ~~possessing~~ his distress.
The appreciation of nature comes ^{only}
with a certain amount of
leisure and comfort, of intelle-
tual ^{insight and} ~~discernment~~, of spiritual
sensitivity. ~~of~~ Primitive
man had none of these and
while his state was ^{in truth} ~~indeed~~ a
natural state it was a very
low and crude and uninspi-
ring ^{one} ~~state~~. To the charge that
the artificialities of complex

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civilized life have deprived man
of his primitive naturalness Edmund
Burke counters cleverly when
he says that "Art is man's
nature". It lies in the very nature
of man's spiritual evolution that
he move from simplicity to
complexity, from homogeneity
to heterogeneity from the natural
to the ^{so-called} artificial. ~~art, then, in~~
~~being the an interpretation of~~
~~nature is the truest gauge of~~
~~man's spiritual progress.~~
Our civilized society to-day
with its infinite conventionalities,
its countless customs and
practices its manifold diversities
its variegated opinions its
conflicting theories, faiths

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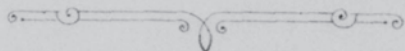
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and ideals its tunnels and
skyscrapers, its wires
and telephones and its ten
thousand other mechanical
contrivances which ~~make~~ com-
plicate and ~~inturbify~~ life, is
withal as truly natural as
was the savage ^{society} ~~state~~ of primi-
tive man with its vast same-
ness and ~~obviousness~~ ^{simplicity} its crude-
ness and ~~obviousness~~ ^{obviousness} ~~apparentness~~. May
none our life is more natural
for it is a phenomenon of nature's
higher manifestations.

When I say, therefore, that
our nature-festival beckons
us to return to nature and
to the natural, I do not mean
to the primitive and ^{the} simple,

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to the crude and the uncultured.
I mean that amidst the com-
plexities and ^{intricacies} ~~flexibilities~~, our
urban ~~lives~~ ^{life} we ~~shrink~~ these
perils caution us to not to
~~entreat our souls in so irrevocable~~ ^{relaps too}
~~permit~~ ⁱⁿ the dust of commercialism,
or in the fads and fashions of
a superficial social life ~~to~~
to ~~be~~ ^{come} ~~deaden our souls~~ ^{dear} to the appeal
of the beautiful in nature, ~~but~~
Unfortunately such is frequently
the case. We frequently
centralize all our thought
and energies ^{so completely} upon the im-
mediate commercial problem
or ^{the} social situation that we
lose ~~our~~ ^{the} sense of proportion
in ~~per~~ ^{per}spective. And uncon-

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seriously we take the "cattle of
our bough for the great waves
that echo round the world"
~~Our petty troubles~~ worn up
before our eyes as the "Weltweia-
re itself" In our single-
minded application to the ^{small} ~~petty~~
and ^{even petty} ~~small~~ things of life we
lose sight of the big things,
the great movements, the
critical events, the things
that really count. Only
an ^{emotional and intellectual} ~~appreciation~~ ^{of} ~~nature~~ ^{its pastures}
its grandeur and greatness
can give back to man the
sense of perspective, the ability
to evaluate one's self and one's
own sub specie aeternitatis,
from the viewpoint of Eternity.

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~~these nature festivals are also reli-~~
~~gious festivals, because they endeavor~~
~~to interpret life for men. They teach~~
~~that only~~ and our festival also reminds us
~~that there~~ ^{alone} is an aesthetic apprecia-
tion, nature will give to life
~~that~~ ^{added} zest and meaning and
~~purpose~~ ^{which renders it enjoyable and} ~~purpose~~
In only the poet—and
every one who loves nature
with all his heart and with
all his soul and with all his
might is a poet—only the poet
gets the full import of life's message.
Only he can tap the deep wells of spiritual life.
Only the poet can read the great
epic of life written by the
fingers of God ^{upon} ~~across~~ the face
of the earth. Where the un-
trained ears of men ~~can~~
hear but ^{the jarring, the} ~~the~~ ^{in life} ~~the~~ ^{the}
discord. The poet's ear catches
the soft intimations of heavenly
harmonies and where the
eyes of earthly men behold

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the diabolical and ^{the} grey ~~eyes~~
but witched and misery
the inner eyes of the poet Asarn's
promises of rainbow glories.
To Peter Bell,

"A promise" by a river's brink
"A yellow promise" was to him
"And it was nothing more,
but the poet

"finds tongues in trees, books
in the running brooks,
sermons in stones, and good
in every thing."

the ~~festivals~~ teach us that
the ~~holy~~ ^{holy} paragon for the beautiful
in ~~life~~ ^{nature} will lighten the burdens
of our worldly cares. It will
create for us even in the
midst of a desert of adversity,
an oasis of refuge where
our souls may rest ⁱⁿ at

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place in the bosom of mother
earth. (next page)

A love of nature is a great
moral factor in the work of social
regeneration ~~society~~. It is for
this reason that we emphasize
the nature-significance of our
festivals to-day. The man
who truly loves nature
cannot ~~be~~ deliberately be
bad. For nature is a mellow-
ing, softening influence in
one's life. It teaches sympathy
and love and moderation. It
makes ~~men~~ ^{men} aware of their
common origin and common
destiny. The man who loves
a flower cannot hate a ~~man~~ ^{fellow-}
He who loves sunshine will

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not deprive little children of
it by ^{excluding them from} ~~excluding them from~~ ^{incarcerating} them in mills
and factories.
He who lives the fresh air of
God will not entomb human
souls in holes of darkness
in filthy tenement houses. (over)
And when I speak of the love of
nature I ~~do not~~ have no refer-
ence to that shallow, superficial,
wealthy, fast and ostentatious
love of nature which we all
acknowledge and proclaim
to that deeper, fuller, truer
love that can make us
as it made Porcupine
catch in the note of a thrush
a glimpse of another world
and another day ^{a love} that
can consecrate and ennoble
our whole life.