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The Untraditional Heaven in Emily Dickinson's "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church"

Like many of her poems, Emily Dickinson's "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church," published in 1864, explores themes of religion—likely inspired by her personal experiences with religion. In her life of solitude, Dickinson often experienced God through nature rather than through established religion. In "Some Keep the Sabbath Going to Church," Emily Dickinson's speaker uses contrasting images of nature and church to designate "Heaven" as a state of existence rather than the end goal of a religious life.

Dickinson's intentional use of punctuation in the poem creates a contemplative mood and reading environment. Throughout the poem, Dickinson chooses to end the lines with em dashes instead of the more commonly used commas or periods. This deliberate choice of punctuation causes the readers to linger for a moment at the end of each line. As their eyes follow the dash, readers are given a moment to contemplate the claim that the speaker has made in the previous line. Overall, the em dashes slow the pace of the poem, allowing readers the space they need to take in the speaker's message about the Sabbath.

In the first few lines of the poem, "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church--/ I keep it, staying at Home --," Dickinson's word choice creates a distinction between the speaker and other people in the speaker's society. The reader can presume that the "Sabbath" mentioned is the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week set aside to commemorate the resurrection of Christ.¹ Right away, the first person "I" speaker separates themselves from the "some," an unidentified group, that go to church to "keep" the Sabbath. In this instance, "keep" refers to observing an

¹ All definitions are from the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. See Appendix B.

event, the Sabbath, with due formality and in the prescribed manner. While this usage is appropriate in the first line, it creates a contradiction in the second line. According to the *OED* definition, one cannot “keep” the Sabbath at home, for the prescribed manner to observe the Sabbath is to attend church. Despite this definition discrepancy, the speaker implies that they are just as well able to acknowledge the holy day at home. Though the speaker has created a separation between themselves and those who attend church, Dickinson’s word choice implies that the act of keeping the Sabbath can be achieved in both spaces.

Despite the connection the speaker has created between church and home, the two spaces traditionally serve rather different functions. The Christian church is a building for public worship and important religious ceremonies, such as weddings or baptisms. Typically, in Dickinson’s time, there were expectations of dress and behavior for those entering a church. In contrast, one’s home is their dwelling place and the center of their domestic life, and there are far fewer expectations for residents when at home. As opposed to “house,” the word “home” implies an emotional connection and feeling of safety. At home, people are typically most comfortable. By stating that they are able to keep the Sabbath at home, the speaker is claiming that they do not need to be in a specific space in order to worship. Rather, they prefer to be in the presence of God in a place where they are most comfortable. In addition, the capitalization of both “Church” and “Home” shows that the speaker believes these establishments to be equal. Typically, the capitalization of “Church” in writing indicates the large, overarching religious establishment. By capitalizing both “Home” and “Church,” Dickinson creates a parallel between the two spaces. According to the speaker, the same act of “keeping” the Sabbath can be achieved in the speaker’s home just as well as in a church building.

Furthering this parallel between church and home, the speaker continues the stanza by providing specific examples of how their home is able to replace the church. In the third line, “With a Bobolink for a Chorister--,” Dickinson creates a particularly interesting comparison. The word “chorister” can refer not only to a church choir, but also to an angelic choir or a flock of singing birds. Hence, the mentioned bobolink, a small bird common in the American Northeast whose name is a loose interpretation of its call, can be a literal member of its own chorister, as well as a symbolic chorister of church members or angels. For the speaker, listening to the song of the bobolink is a religious, perhaps even angelic, experience. By including the word “chorister” specifically, Dickinson constructs several levels of meaning, elevating a common bird to potential supernatural status and further demonstrating how holy encounters can occur outside of the bounds of a physical church.

The final line of the first stanza, “And an Orchard, for a Dome--”, continues the idea of nature replacing aspects of institutionalized church. The capitalization of both “Orchard” and “Dome” is consistent with the first two lines of the poem and demonstrates the reverence that the speaker holds for both of these places. In Dickinson’s time, “orchard” referred to a usually enclosed garden of herbs and fruit trees, smaller and more domestic than the commercial orchards today. “Dome” is a reference to a cathedral church, built with a large, grand dome to draw the eyes upwards to the heavens. In this comparison, the architectural wonder of the dome is replaced by the height and natural beauty of the orchard’s trees. Similar to the comparison between the bobolink and a chorister, the orchard is a holy place for the speaker, and the trees offer the same reminder of heaven as the dome.

In the second stanza, the speaker shifts their focus to the acts and expectations of attending church. “Some keep the Sabbath” is repeated from the first stanza, this time finishing

the line with “in Surplice--/I, just wear my Wings--”. The speaker has traded in their surplice, a loose, white linen garment worn by those taking part in a church service, for “Wings.” Readers can assume that these are not literal wings like those of a bird; rather, this use of “wings” is likely an allusion to angels, especially considering the possible angelic connotations of “chorister” in the previous stanza. In most traditional biblical interpretations, angels wear long white robes similar to a surplice, and in the church, a surplice is a garment worn only by those in positions of power. However, the speaker, who to the reader’s knowledge is not in one of these positions, is able to reach a similar level of power through wearing their “Wings.” In the context of the phrase “I, just wear my Wings,” the word “just,” meaning “only,” emphasizes the fact that the speaker needs only their symbolic wings and presumably their regular clothing, in place of a surplice, to keep the Sabbath.

The stanza continues with the lines “And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church, / Our little Sexton--sings.” According to the *OED*, a sexton is “an officer of a parish church whose responsibilities have traditionally included bell-ringing and grave-digging.” In a church, sextons have a prominent but somber role. In this poem, however, the speaker describes their sexton, likely the bobolink from the first stanza, as “little,” implying feelings of endearment and tenderness towards the sexton. With this word choice, Dickinson is suggesting both that the speaker cares for and enjoys the presence of the sexton and that this sexton is more carefree than others. In addition to this untraditional description, the verbs in these two lines also carry quite different connotations. Though “tolling” can refer to the general act of pulling a rope to ring a bell, the word is also associated with sounding bells to announce funerals. While there is no mention of a funeral in this poem, Dickinson’s choice to use the word “tolling” creates a darker, heavier mood in that line. In contrast, the alliteration and word choice in the line “Our little

Sexton—sings,” creates a much lighter mood. As opposed to the somber bell toll, this singing is cheerful, and the act is perceived not as a chore but as something to be enjoyed.

Summarizing the theme of the poem, in the final stanza, the speaker questions the role of men in relaying the word of God. The first and second lines of the stanza read “God preaches, a noted Clergyman--/and the sermon is never long.” A clergyman is “a man of the clerical order” or “an ordained minister of the Christian church.” In most churches, the clergyman, thought to be of higher spiritual status than those to whom he preaches, delivers the sermon, relaying the ways and words of God to his parishioners. However, in Dickinson’s poem, God is directly delivering the sermon to the speaker. Describing God as “a noted Clergyman” is an example of irony: God, both the object and the creator of worship, does not need to be given this title in order to prove his worthiness in the church. With this description, the speaker is undercutting the essentiality of the clergyman, for if the speaker is able to receive the sermon directly from God, all other clergymen are unnecessary. Rather than listening to a man deliver a lengthy sermon, the speaker is able to be directly in the presence of God.

In the final two lines of the poem, the speaker redefines the idea of the traditional Christian heaven. According to the *OED*, heaven is “the final abode of the redeemed after their life on earth.” Spending eternity in heaven with God is the final reward for living a Christian life. However, in the last two lines of the poem, the speaker alters this idea by stating “So instead of getting to Heaven, at last--/ I’m going all along.” In this case, “getting” is “to succeed in coming or going” and implies an end goal; in contrast “going” is to “move or travel towards a place or in a particular direction” and describes a journey rather than a destination. In addition, with the words “all along,” defined as “all the time,” “continuously,” and “without interruption,” the speaker is demonstrating that they do not believe heaven is a place to get to or an end goal.

Instead, they are able to continuously be in heaven by communicating directly with God and existing in the nature God created. While those who are going to church, wearing the surplice and ringing the bells, are doing so not necessarily because they enjoy those tasks but to get to heaven, the speaker is able to dwell continuously in a heavenly state.

In “Some keep the Sabbath going to Church,” Dickinson uses a combination of church vocabulary and nature imagery to simultaneously explain the similarity between the two spaces and reject the traditions established by the church. In the green of the orchard, surrounded by the bobolink’s song, the poem’s speaker is able to enjoy the benefits of a religious experience without having to comply with the routines mandated by religious powers. Ultimately, the speaker challenges the idea of the Christian heaven, arguing that one does not need to devote their earthly lives to the goal of getting to heaven. Rather, one can live in heaven on earth.

Works Cited

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Appendix A

“Some keep the Sabbath going to Church”

Emily Dickinson

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 –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
I, just wear my Wings –
And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
Our little Sexton – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –
I’m going, all along.

Appendix B

A (an)

- Definition: before a noun denoting an individual object or notion, or denoting an individualized substance, quality, or state, and before a collective noun.
- Part of Speech: adjective
- Word's origins: shortening of a long vowel of Old English
- Quotations:
 - 1: H.W. Longfellow "A celestial brightness-a more ethereal beauty." 1847
 - 2: A.C. Swinburne "Hamlet himself is almost more of a satirist than a philosopher." 1880

And

- Definition: Coordinating; introducing a word, phrase, clause, or sentence, which is to be taken side by side with, along with, or in addition to, that which precedes it.
- Part of Speech: conjunction
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: G. Grote "The immortal food, nectar, and ambrosia." 1846
 - 2: LD. Tennyson "The bond of man and wife." 1859

All along

- Definition: all the time, from the beginning, throughout; continuously, without interruption
- Part of Speech: adverb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: T Carlye "They are German Novelists, not English ones; and their Germanhood I have all along regarded as a quality, not as a fault" 1827
 - 2: E.A. Freeman "The Church...had been all along, the point of centralisation." 1861

At

- Definition: the most general determination of simple localization in space, expressing, strictly, the simple relation of a thing to a point of space which it touches
- Part of Speech: preposition
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: G. White "the cut and deliver the materials at the spot." 1789

- 2: Sc. Monthly “These streamers seem to converge at a point beyond the zenith.” - 1883

At last

- Definition: at the end, in the end, finally, ultimately; at the end of one’s life; after a while, after a long time
- Part of Speech: adverb
- Word’s origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: C. Dickens “Here at last I had found a man who spoke only of what he had seen, and known.” 1886
 - 2: J. London “At last, after three days of variable winds, we have caught the northeast trades.” 1904

Bell

- Definition: A hollow body of cast metal, formed to ring, or emit a clear musical sound, by the sonorous vibration of its entire circumference, when struck by a clapper, hammer or other appliance. The larger kinds are used for giving signals of various import to the inhabitants of a town or district, and especially in connection with public worship.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: Low German, Old English
- Quotations:
 - 1: W. Cowper “The sound of the church-going bell.” 1782
 - 2: G. Rose “He put out his hand to pull the bell.” 1815

Bobolink

- Definition: A North American singing-bird which appears in the northern states in the spring, and returns southward at the end of the summer.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: at first Bob Lincoln, a free rendering of the note or call of the bird
- Quotations:
 - 1: T. Parker “Who listen to the whippoorwill and the bobolink.” 1849
 - 2: *Life W. Irving* “The history of the bobolink, or bob-o-lincoln.” 1855

Clergyman

- Definition: a man of the clerical order; an ordained minister of the Christian church; one in holy orders
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: middle English
- Quotations:

- 1: T. De Quincey “A writer of great talent, Mr. Foster, the Baptist clergyman.” 1831
- 2: W.E. Gladstone “A well-known Presbyterian Clergyman, of Edinburgh.” 1840

Chorister

- Definition: of a church choir
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: Middle English, Anglo-Norman
- Quotations:
 - 1: G. Eliot “A melody...sung by the pure voice of a boyish chorister.” 1859
 - 2: W.R. Moody “Moody had engaged a young man...to be chorister in his church and Sunday school.”

Church

- Definition: A building for public Christian worship or rights such as baptism, marriage, etc
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: Old English, related to Dutch and German
- Quotations:
 - 1: H. Fielding “Some Folks...used indeed to doubt whether they were lawfully married in a Church or no.” 1749
 - 2: R.W. Emerson “I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching” 1841

Dome

- Definition: A cathedral church (dom)
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: German
- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Hanway “There is also the dome, which is a cathedral church.” 1753
 - 2: E.A. Freeman “As Innsbruck never was a Bishop’s see, there is no dom.” 1876

For

- Definition: representing, as representative of
- Part of Speech: preposition
- Word’s origins: Old English
- Quotations:
 - 1: T.B. Macaulay “The members for many counties and large towns.” 1842
 - 2: *Fraser’s Mag* “Walker returned thanks for his lady.” 1843

Getting

- Definition: with a preposition indicating motion, an adverb of motion to or from a place, or an adverbial or prepositional phrase expressing distance: to succeed in coming or going, to bring oneself to
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: borrowing from early Scandinavian
- Quotations:
 - 1: F. Marryat "We never can get across this patch of clear grass without being seen." 1847
 - 2: J.A. Grant "The mould getting amongst plants was very disheartening to the collector." 1864

God

- Definition: especially in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: the Supreme Being, regarded as the creator and ruler of the universe
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: S. Green "I did not think that London was yet such a stink of depravity, as to openly serve God and Satan on the same day." 1810
 - 2: E.R. Conder "For by this name God we understand an Infinite Mind, everywhere present, the source and foundation of all others existence, possessed of all possible power, wisdom, and excellence." 1877

Go (am going)

- Definition: to move or travel towards a place, person, or thing, or in a particular direction, and related senses
- Part of Speech: Verb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: C. Reeve "I am resolved...to go to the King." 1777
 - 2: J.R.H. Hawthorn "If you will please to go downstairs, and look on a shelf in my parlour, you will find a bible." 1881

Going (Go)

- Definition: to move, travel, journey
- Part of Speech: Verb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations

- 1: T. Holcroft “As I was become very cautious in money matters, I meant to go by the coach.” -1797
- 2: C. Dickens “Winkle, will you go on horseback?” -1836

Heaven

- Definition: In the Christian tradition, the abode of God and of the angels and person's who enjoy God's presence, traditionally regarded as being beyond the sky; the final abode of the redeemed after their life on earth
- Part of Speech: Noun
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: C. Rossetti “Heaven is the presence of God: the presence of God, then, is heaven.” 1879
 - 2: E.D. Clarke “We believe no soul can go to heaven without it.” 1810

Home

- Definition: A dwelling place; a person's house or abode; the fixed residence of a family or household; the seat of domestic life and interests.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: T.B. Macaulay “That attachment which every man naturally feels for his home.” 1849
 - 2: *Harper's Mag.* “A lovely drive...is bordered with homes, many of which make pretensions to much more than comfort.” 1882

I

- Definition: the subjective case of the first person singular pronoun
- Part of Speech: pronoun
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: F. Burney “I never trusted myself in her room but I am sure to be ruined.” - 1782
 - 2: C. Thaxter “Had I not been such a travel stained Cleopatra, and so tired and hot, I should have had a sparkling and vivacious time.” -1861

In

- Definition: of place or position in space or anything having material extension: Within the limits or bounds of, within

- Part of Speech: preposition
- Word's origins:
- Quotations:
 - 1: T.B. Macaulay "The restored wanderer reposed safe in the palace of his ancestors." 1849
 - 2: Dickens "The wind's in the east." 1853

Instead of

- Definition: in place of, in lieu of, in room of; for, in substitution for
- Part of Speech: adverb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: O. Goldsmith "Instead of money he gave promises." 1766
 - 2: J.W. Carlyle "We went on the Saturday instead of the Friday." 1852

Is

- Definition: With adverb or adverb phrase, indicating the relationship of the subject in place, state, time, etc., to another thing or person
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: W.M. Thackeray "Where be the sentries who used to salute?" 1861
 - 2: W. Owen "Mrs. Lott's River Trip is to be next Tuesday." 1912

It

- Definition: the subjective and objective case of the third person singular neuter pronoun; the thing previously mentioned, implied, or easily identified.
- Part of Speech: pronoun
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: King James Bible "And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb" -1611
 - 2: Argosy "We heard the clatter of the vase as it fell." -1847

Just

- Definition: Used to place the focus on a particular word or phrase
- Part of Speech: adverb
- Word's origins:
- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Ruskin "I write just a line to apologize for my silence." 1866

- 2: W.C. Smith “Doris is not a Cleopatra...she’s just a Highland lady Touched with an Eastern strain.” 1884

Keep

- Definition: to observe with due formality and in the prescribed manner (any religious rite, ceremony, service, feast, fast or other occasion); to celebrate, solemnize
- Part of Speech: Verb
- Word’s origins: Late Old English; no related words known in the cognate languages
- Quotations
 - 1: C.M. Yonge “The King was keeping the feast of Easter.” -1867
 - 2: J. Hawley “He keeps the Sabbath at Boston.” 1774

Little

- Definition: 1).Implying endearment or appreciation, or tender feeling on the part of the speaker. Also coupled with an adjective expressing such feelings; Part of Speech: adjective
- Word’s origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - C. Dickens “She had the most delightful little voice, the gayest little laugh, the pleasantest and most fascinating little ways, that ever led a lost youth into hopeless slavery.” 1850
 - R. W. Dixon “Sweet was her carriage, sweet the little folds Of her fair dress close drawn with meekest care.” 1883

Long

- Definition: of a period of time, or a process, state, or action: having a great extent in duration; occupying or requiring much time from beginning to end
- Part of Speech: adjective
- Word’s origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: G. Walker “I took a long look at Don Raphael.” 1803
 - 2: W.M. Thayer “it’s an all-day job to go there, and a pretty long day at that.” 1863

My

- Definition: of or belonging to me; of or relating to myself; which I have, hold, or possess
- Part of Speech: pronoun
- Word’s origins: variation of “mine,” which is from Germanic
- Quotations:

- 1: M. Arnold “My time will now be my own.” 1788
- 2: R.L. Stevenson “It is my murderer in the secret passage.” 1888

Never

- Definition: at no time or moment; on no occasion; not ever
- Part of Speech: adverb
- Word’s origins: formed within English by compounding
- Quotations:
 - 1: N. Hawthorne “My child must seek a heavenly Father; she shall never know an earthly one!” 1850
 - 2: C.J. Lever “I certainly shall never be rebuked for my becomingness” 1872

Noted

- Definition: particularly noticed, observed, or marked; well or widely known; distinguished, celebrated, famous; notorious
- Part of Speech: adjective
- Word’s origins: Formed within English
- Quotations:
 - 1: J.F. Cooper “A man whose misdeeds in commerce are as universally noted, as the stoppage of a general dealer.” 1830
 - 2: H. James “Embroidery...an art in which her bold, free invention was as noted as the agility of her needle.” 1908

Orchard

- Definition: Originally: a garden (frequently closed), especially for herbs and fruit trees. Now: an area of land, frequently enclosed, given over to the cultivation of fruit trees.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins: Probably borrowed from Latin
- Quotations:
 - 1: C. Marshall “An orchard may be spoken of here, to plant trees of full size in, which are forbidden a place in the garden.” 1796
 - 2: *Outing* “Back of its hacienda is a fine orchard and vegetable garden.” 1887
 -

Our

- Definition: Belonging to or associated with the speaker and one or more other people previously mentioned or easily identified; belonging to or associated with people in general.
- Part of Speech: Pronoun
- Word’s origins: Germanic

- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Addison “The Perfection of our Sight above other Senses.” 1712
 - 2: W.M. Thackeray “Miss Briggs and I are plunged in grief...for the death of our Papa.” 1847

Preaches (preach)

- Definition: to deliver a sermon or religious address
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word’s origins: French
- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Austen “I could not preach, but to the educated.” 1814
 - 2: J.H. Newman “The Greek clergy preached against them as heretics.” 1854

Sabbath

- Definition: Since the Reformation, often applied to ‘the Lord’s day’, i.e. the first day of the week (Sunday) observed by Christians in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ.
- Part of Speech: Noun
- Word’s origins: Latin and French
- Quotations
 - 1: N. Hawthorne “Severe and sunless remembrances of the Sabbaths of childhood” -1863
 - 2: S. Smith “Prayer should be offered up eminently, and empathetically... on the Sabbath” 1809

Sermon

- Definition: a discourse, usually delivered from a pulpit and based upon a text of Scripture, for the purpose of giving religious instructions or exhortation.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word’s origins:
- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Addison “The Sunday before, he had made a most incomparable sermon out of Dr. Barrow” 1712
 - 2: M. Arnold “A life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea meetings, openings of the chapels, sermons.” 1869

Sexton

- Definition: an officer responsible for a church and its property, and for tasks relating to its maintenance or management; an officer of a parish church whose responsibilities have traditionally included bell-ringing and grave-digging.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word's origins: French
- Quotations:
 - 1: T. Hood "They went and told the sexton, and the sexton toll'd the bell." 1826
 - 2: S. Judd "Mysie was the sexton of this Church,-she opened the house, swept the floor, and lighted the candles."

Sings

- Definition: 1). to chant or intone, in the performance of divine service, to say mass. 2). To articulate or utter words or sounds in succession with musical inflections or modulations of the voice, so as to produce an effect entirely different from that of ordinary speech.
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: W. Shakespeare "I haue build two Chauntries, where the sad and solemne Priests sing still for Richards Soule. 1616
 - 2: H.B. Stowe "I've been up in Tom's room, hearing him sing." 1852

So

- Definition: For that reason, on that account, accordingly, consequently, therefore
- Part of Speech: conjunction
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: W. Scott "A shelter...is all I seek for; so name your rent." 1821
 - 2: G.N. Boothby "We leave at daybreak for Pekin, so I will wish you good-bye now." 1896

Some

- Definition: an indefinite or unspecified (but not large) number of persons (or animals)' certain persons not named or enumerated.
- Part of speech: pronoun
- Word's origins: inherited from Germanic
- Quotations
 - 1: H. Glass "Some love scalded Gooseberries with them" -1747
 - 2: J. Wilson "Some, my son, Would bit thee trust in time." 1816

Staying (stay)

- Definition: To remain in a place or in others' company (as opposed to going on or going away)
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: Most likely French
- Quotations:
 - 1: J. Swift "I grew weary of the Sea, and intended to stay at home with my Wife and Family" -1726
 - 2: H. Martineau "His wife seemed utterly indifferent whether she went or staid." 1832

Surplice

- Definition: A loose vestment of white linen having wide sleeves and, in its amplest form, reaching to the feet, worn (usually over a cassock) by clerics, choristers, and others taking part in church services.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word's origins: Anglo-Norman, Old French
- Quotations:
 - 1: W. Irving "I saw at a distance the choristers, in their white surplices, crossing the aisle and entering the choir." 1820
 - 2: G. MacDonald "Is it a point of conscience with you to wear the surplice when you preach?" 1867

The

- Definition: Before a noun denoting a thing or person that is unique or considered to be unique, or of which there is only one at a time
- Part of Speech: adjective
- Word's origins: Germanic
- Quotations
 - 1: J. Addison "While you are admiring the Sky in a Starry Night" 1709
 - 2: LD. Tennyson "As shines the mood in clouded skies" 1842

To

- Definition: Expressing direction directed towards and reaching: governing a noun denoting the place, thing, or person approached and reached
- Part of Speech: preposition
- Word's origins: Old English
- Quotations
 - 1: M. Edgeworth "Forester was sent to Edinburgh" 1801
 - 2: F.G. Kitton "Dickens returned to London" 1904

Tolling

- Definition: to cause a great bell to sound by pulling the rope, esp. in order to give an alarm or signal; to ring a great bell; on the occasion of a death (the passing-bell) or funeral
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: nothing similar outside English
- Quotations:
 - 1: G.P.R. James "You run to the porter and tell him to toll the great bell with all his might." 1849
 - 2: E.O.M. Duetsch "The bells were tolled in an irregular and funereal fashion." 1873

Wear

- Definition: To carry or bear on one's body or on some member of it, for covering, warmth, ornament, etc; to be dressed in; to be covered or decked with; to have on.
- Part of Speech: verb
- Word's origins: germanic
- Quotations:
 - 1: W.A. Butler "The last we met, was in utter despair, Because she had nothing whatever to wear!" 1857
 - 2: G.C. Harlan "In Germany...it has been impossible to fill the ranks of the army without allowing soldiers to wear glasses." 1879
 -

Wings

- Definition: Attributed to supernatural beings, as angels, demons, etc., and to fabulous creatures, as dragons, griffins, etc.
- Part of Speech: noun
- Word's origins:
- Quotations:
 - 1: LD. Byron "The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast." 1815
 - 2: T. Hardy "Since my poor husband left me to wear his wings.' 1885

With

- Definition: After a noun, in a qualifying phrase indicating a characteristic or distinctive part or adjunct: Having, possessing; having in or upon it, containing, bearing
- Part of Speech: preposition
- Word's origins: Old English

- Quotations:
 - 1: *Penny Cycl* “Those consonants are conveniently classed into those with and those without voice.” 1842
 - 2: W.M. Thackeray “A paper-knife with a mother of a pearl blade.” 1848