

Booklet of Sermon Notes

Earl C. Davis

Petersham, MA

1939-1940¹

September 10, 1939

"The Days to Come"

Service with christening

2-8; 73-119

Hymn Numbers: 25-2nd, 272, 438

Marie Curie, Born 1867, Nov 7²

Paul.

¹ For the years 1938 through 1947 Davis collected his sermon notes in more-or-less annual hand-bound booklets. These are all notes, not full-text sermons, and are somewhat harder to interpret.

² Marie Curie (1867-1934) French physicist. First woman to receive the Nobel Prize.

September 17, 1939

"A Common Faith"

Service 3-p.12 75-121

Readings: 2 Kings 23:1-3; Matthew 4:1-10, Ruskin³

Hymn Numbers: 6, 274, 314

Story of finding "Deut" in 621 BC in the rubbish of the temple.⁴

An incident in history. Also, a parable of life.

Illustration of season's growth.

Leaves fall. But the year's work is a deposit under the bark of the tree, beneath the surface.

We face the same thing year after year.

Slowly we come to a new day.

³ John Ruskin (1819-1900) English writer, philosopher, art critic.

⁴ Likely a reference to the Deuteronomic reform instituted during the reign of King Josiah of Judah (c. 640 BCE - 609 BCE)

September 24, 1939

"Thine Own Gods"

Service 4-17 64-112

Readings: Professor ??? book

Hymn Numbers: 1, 294, 407

Intelligent understanding

What is the basis of friendliness?

Why do enmities arise?

Truth crushed to earth will rise again.

"The eternal years of God are hers!"--Whittier⁵

⁵ Davis attributes this line of poetry to John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) American Quaker poet and abolitionist. But it seems that the line comes from William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) American romantic poet and journalist. This is the last line of his poem, "The Battle-Field."

October 8, 1939

"Pos View" ["Positive View"?)

Service 2nd 28-91

Readings: *Soul of Bible* 276⁶

Hymn Numbers: 10, 208, 408

Haze on the far horizon

Caruthers' Poem

1. Evolution
2. Nature
3. Human nature
4. Moral good

⁶ *The Soul of the Bible: Being Selections from the Old and the New Testaments and the Apocrypha Arranged as Synthetic Readings*, Ulysses G. B. Peirce, ed., Boston: The Beacon Press, 1908. On pages 275-6 are chapters VIII and IX of the Wisdom of Solomon: "Now when I considered in my heart; How that in kinship unto wisdom is immortality, ..."

October 15, 1939

"The Roots of Christianity: The Evolving Features of Christianity"

Service 3-12; 49-109

Readings: Hosea 14; Mark 4:26-29

Hymn Numbers: 47, 74, 250

Time of Hosea, 750 [BCE]

Beginning of thought that the great world forces are friendly to men of intelligent and "loving good will."

2700 years

The Moving Picture.

1. Hosea + his time
2. Exile
3. The suffering servant
4. Christ

"The chosen people"

"Not privileged ???, but leader in life."

October 17-20, 1939

Senexet⁷

Morning Chapel

Mark 4

63 [?]

-
1. Tuesday [10/17/1939] evening. 8:00
 - a. Idea of God, Park
 - b. Chapels, Davis
 - c. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us."⁸
 2. Wednesday [10/18/1939]
 - a. A.M. Chapel, Park
 - b. A.M. The Bible, Davis
 - c. P.M. The Idea of Christ, Park
 - d. Eve. The Idea of Redemption
 - e. Chapel
 3. Thursday [10/19/1939]
 - a. Chapel
 - b. A.M. "The Idea of Faith," Davis
 - c. P.M. "The Practice of Worship and Prayer"
 - d. Eve. "The Idea of Immortality"

Senexet

Reading, ???, Soul of Bible, Page 141⁹.

Outline for Chapel Talk, Oct 17, 1939

⁷ Senexet was a retreat used by Unitarians mid-twentieth century, 276 Senexet Rd., Woodstock, CT. A brief description of an earlier, 1934, Senexet retreat can be found at <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/a-pilgrimage-to-senexet-1934/>. The notes for this meeting suggest that it was organized by Davis and his friend Charles Edward Park, minister of the First Church of Boston.

⁸ John 1:14

⁹ *The Soul of the Bible: Being Selections from the Old and the New Testaments and the Apocrypha Arranged as Synthetic Readings*, Ulysses G. B. Peirce, ed., Boston: The Beacon Press, 1908. On page 141 is a version of psalm 39.

This thought does not change the nature of God, but it does mark a milestone in our thought and understanding of God.

Whatever may be the full and complete nature of God, we may not know, but we do know somewhat of his nature by the manifestation in life.

"God is like Jesus."

The Bible

The very subject in revealing as in comparison with other titles. "The Bible is a fact, an actual concrete product of human history. Whatever may be the significance of its contents, or its influence, there it is, an objective fact of history, not an idea about something, but the thing itself, a product of human experience.

"The book of a 1000 tongues."

But when you come to be ??? up with the enduring features of Christianity, you are looking upon the Bible, not only as a concrete fact of history, but as possible living force in life today, and tomorrow. It is evident that in examining this fact in history, the particular emphasis which we may put upon its varied aspects, will depend upon our interests and point of view.

One of the most surprising discoveries to be made when one begins to get into the interior of this great historic fact is the discovery that so much of it is eternally true, vital and contemporaneous.

The Law and The Prophets

Hosea, 750 B.C. Jeroboam II

In 721 [B.C.E.] Sargon made an end forever of the Kingdom of Israel.

Hosea's theme is that God is punishing Israel in these events of history, not to vindicate his own (Amos') righteousness, but as a chastisement which leads to righteousness, repentance and restoration.

Not a book of magic.
Not a book of supernaturalism.

Trace any so-called supernatural idea back and you find just an ordinary event of history.

Law + form.

Prophetic spirit

Parables of Jesus

He taught as one having authority.¹⁰

¹⁰ Mark 1:22.

October 22, 1939

"The Idea of Christ: Enduring Features of Christianity"

Service 4-17; 58-110

Readings:

Hymn Numbers: 9, 190, 345

Nietzsche: "This glad messenger lived as he taught, *not* to 'redeem' mankind, but to show how man ought to live. ... He does not resist, he does not assert his rights, he takes no single step to ward off his final destiny; rather, he challenges it... And he prays, suffers, loves *with* those and *in* those who do him evil... *Not* to defend oneself, *not* to show anger, *not* to condemn... but yet not to resist those that are evil, but to love them. At bottom there has been only one Christian, and he died on the cross." Page 255, *The Cultural History of the Modern Age*, by Egon Friedell, 1930.¹¹

¹¹ Egon Friedell, 1930, *The Cultural History of the Modern Age*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 255. This quotation from Friedell is itself a quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche's 1890, *The Antichrist*. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) German philosopher. Egon Friedell (1878-1938) Austrian cultural historian.

October 29, 1939

"Human Relations in a Christian Nation"

Service 5-22; 37-97

Readings: Matthew 20:20-28; Readers Digest

Hymn Numbers: 13, 305, 274

What is a Christian Nation?

1. Born of the spirit
2. Awakened to a purpose
3. Aroused to meaning in life

H: Crusader: 1,000

November 5, 1939

Middlesex School

"The Great Tradition: Hence it has Endured."

Readings: Matthew 23:30-41; Matthew 20:20-28; Emerson, poems
Luke 9: 28-36; Thoreau's Diary, May 12, 1857, page
207¹²

Hymn Numbers: 3, 71, 39, 73

¹² Davis is using material for a sermon he first gave in June 1918, "The Great Tradition Becomes the Great Faith," see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/the-great-tradition-becomes-the-great-faith-1918/>. The passage from Thoreau's Diary is also shared there.

November 12, 1939

"Feet of Clay + Never of Iron: Searching for the Great Tradition."

Service: 2-4; 46-103

Readings: Luke 9:28-36; Thoreau's Journal, page 270, May 12, 1857.

Hymn Numbers: 27, 360, 362

See copy of sermon written for Bert Phinney to be used at Pittsfield, Mass.¹³

¹³ The sermon Davis refers to here is his sermon for June 1918, "The Great Tradition Becomes the Great Faith." See <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/the-great-tradition-becomes-the-great-faith-1918/>. According to a note on that sermon's manuscript, in addition to being preached in June 1918, it was preached on July 15, 1951 in Petersham. That note does not mention that it was also preached on November 12, 1939.

November 15, 1939

Groton, Mass.

"The Great Tradition: Hence it has Endured."¹⁴

Service: 16, 495, 399, 208

¹⁴ Davis is using material for a sermon he first gave in June 1918, "The Great Tradition Becomes the Great Faith," see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/the-great-tradition-becomes-the-great-faith-1918/>.

November 19, 1939

"On Being Neutral: Just Living."

Service: 3-20-p.86; 46-103

Readings: Luke 12:22-40

Hymn Numbers: 88, 214, 314-5

"The novelty of fascism and its particular greatness consist in its having theoretically denied that this trend of man towards Democracy and Freedom is fated. For the first time, at least since the English revolutions of the seventeenth century, reaction stood up uncompromisingly and with a claim on perpetuity." G.A. Borgese, *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1939, page 327, "Six Kings."

On Being Neutral

Three thoughts. On what we can do. John ???'s ???

1. Six Kings, Borgese.
2. "That cultural and psychological values have been disregarded, are essential, and will only survive if the small communities with ancient traditions refuse to be merged and choose even a certain degree of economic backwardness so that values not otherwise to be preserved may not perish from the earth."¹⁵
3. What may be do here?
 - a. Personal integrity
 - b. The homestead
 - c. The free church

¹⁵ Gerald Heard, *These Hurrying Years: An Historical Outline, 1900-1933*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 307. Henry FitzGerald Heard, aka Gerald Heard (1889-1971) British-born, American historian.

November 26, 1939

Union Thanksgiving Service, North Church

"Force and Values"

Readings: Isaiah 41; Luke 18:9-14; Mayflower Compact

Justify: "To free from guilt."

So easy for our feelings of Thanksgiving to become just smug boasting.

Many common things to be thankful for. These we take for granted, perhaps we take them too much for granted.

III--In these confusing times, two important things to be taken as specific reasons for Thanksgiving. Both mark great advances over the prevailing spirit and standards of former times.

First. Freedom of thought etc.

- a. decision of the Supreme Court handed down last Monday.
Back of that a long story.

In 1165, 30 weavers in the diocese of Worcester were summoned before the Council of Oxford. Answered that they were Christians, and revered the teachings of the apostles, but made light of the sacraments and the priestly power. They were branded as heretics, and driven out of the city to perish in the winter cold.¹⁶

"The pious firmness of this severity not only cleansed the realm of England from the pestilence which had now crept in, but also prevented it from creeping in again."¹⁷

¹⁶ Davis discusses this history in his "Rise and Development of the Congregational Polity and Spirit: Lecture II: Earliest Traces of Congregational Churches," see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/lecture-ii-earliest-traces-of-congregational-churches/>.

¹⁷ John Brown, *Pilgrim Fathers of New England and their Puritan Successors*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895, p. 17. The author, John Brown (1830-1922) was minister of the Bunyan Meeting in Bedford, England, and his historical works are still in print. Davis quotes Brown in his "Rise and Development of the Congregational Polity and Spirit: Lecture II: Earliest Traces of Congregational Churches," see

But by about the year 1600 this heresy of independent thought had become so strong in England and Scotland, as well as elsewhere, that we find it contending mightily with both the Roman hierarchy and the kingly power.

Sir Andrew Melville and King James, 6th of Scotland, 1st of England.¹⁸

Church at Scrooby.¹⁹ 1606.

Today you come to this house of worship of your own free will and accord. And you may stay away of your own free will and accord. Back of that action is the decision of the Supreme Court, which says that so far as laws and institutions can guarantee it, 120,000,000 people live under this freedom of religion.

Of course, the civil liberty mentioned in the Constitution, and sealed by a clear decision of the court, does not prevent you from frittering away the most precious discovery of the ages. But here it is, something to be profoundly thankful for.

The changed attitude towards a war. The Truce of God. Private warfare.

III* Thanksgiving for Responsibility. What we today think may tomorrow, become reality in our human attitudes.

<https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/lecture-ii-earliest-traces-of-congregational-churches/>, p. 1.

¹⁸ Andrew Melville (1545-1622) Scottish scholar, theologian, poet, religious reformer. He opposed the episcopal tendency in the Church and worked to establish the Presbyterian form of religious government. In this he opposed King James (VI of Scotland and I of England) (1566-1625).

¹⁹ The Church at Scrooby is the church from which the Pilgrims emigrated first to Holland and then to the Plymouth Colony. See Davis' history of this church here <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/lecture-i-the-church-at-scrooby/>.

December 3, 1939

"Disposing of Trouble Makers"

R.R. 1-3: 6-90

Readings: Micah 6:6-8; Acts 19:23-41

Hymns: 3, 248, 289

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord."²⁰

"What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."²¹

1. Both personal and social problems
2. ??? ???
3. Story of a riot

Propaganda: 1 swallow makes a spring.

²⁰ Micah 6:6.

²¹ Micah 6:8

December 3, 1939

Barre Y.P.R.U.²²

"Truth, Service and Worship"

Ibsen's The Master Builder²³

²² Likely, "Young People's Religious Union"

²³ Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) Norwegian playwright and theatre director. Ibsen published his play, "The Master Builder" in 1892. Among other aspects of the play, it concerned issues about youth and maturity.

December 10, 1939²⁴

"Overcome Evil with Good"

R.R. 2-7-Litany, 63

Readings: Romans chapter 12

Hymns: 17, 74, 152

Somewhere between 350 and 400 [CE] Christians began to debate:

The birth of its founder on December 25th

That was part of [a] great change: covering over early
Christianity

From faith + influence to Authority and power

²⁴ On back of page: "Possible Christening next Sunday"

December 17, 1939

Morning Service

"In the Face of Difficulties: Good News"

R.R. 3-12-Litany 38-91

Readings: Mark 1:1-15

Hymns: 154, 159, 77

Saducees	
Pharisees	... Jesus
Zealots	
Essenes: John the Baptist	

Names of children born or Christened in the Parish during the year, read at the Vesper service Dec. 17, 1939

Brinna Anna Baird,
Born March 7, 1939

Dr. Walter S. Baird
Mary Davis Baird

Gail Sidney Peaslee
Born April 6, 1939

Dr. Sidnay C. Peaslee,
Florence Hunt

Nancy Ann Conant Burdett
Born April 10, 1939

Dr. Waldo H. Burdett
Arvirilla C. Burdett

Peter Davis
Born May 1, 1939

Byron Stevens Davis
Anne Merritt Davis

Hanford Guy Langstroth
Born July 11, 1939

William Edward Langstroth
Elsyer Elizabeth Langstroth

Hope Brinser
Born September 2, 1939

Dr. Of [sic] Ayers Brinser
Joan Waldo Brinser

December 24, 1939

"Always the Fullness of Time"

Service for Christmas 12-45::69 116

Readings: Matthew 2:1-11; Poem Window in Nazareth

Hymns: 156-533, 166-534/438, 163-195

Always the fullness of time. People turning

Grave of an unknown soldier

The cradle of an unknown child

Picture of Mary and Joseph's home

Christening

Christmas Service in First Parish Church

Prelude. Sing Allilulia Volkmar

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Hymn. Adesta Fideles.

Responsive Sentences

"Blessed is He that Cometh in the Name of the Lord"

Scripture Readings: From St. Matthew's Gospel; Poem

Prayer

Christmas Carol: Hark the Christmas Bells are Ringing. Mannay

Offertory: Hosanna in the Highest. Irving

Hymn: Silent Night

Sermon: Always in the Fullness of Time

Christening Service

Hymn: Joy to the World

Benediction

Nunc Dimittis

December 31, 1939

"Something Old, Something New"

5-22 51-105

Readings: Proverbs 28:12-28; Revelation 21:1-4

Hymns: 349, 149-314, 149-Duke St.

- (1) The Cherokee Indians
Burned old and cast off clothing and things. Cleaned
cabin. Put out old fires, removed ashes and burned dirt.
Built new fires
- (2) New Year's calling
Scotch: cake and spiced ale

Wisdom: Knowledge plus understanding

To be burned: Prejudice, bitterness, regrets, etc.

Fuel for new fire

January 7, 1940

"Something About Communism"

7th Page 30 39-98

Readings: Acts 2:43-47; Acts 4:32-5:11

Hymns: 1, 337, 313

John Ball²⁵

Not a new thing.

Early Christians

Early Reformation, 1360

Munster

Pilgrims

Early 19th century: ??? ???

???

Communist Manifesto, Marx, Engels, 1848²⁶

²⁵ John Ball (1338-1381) English priest who took a prominent part in the Peasant's revolt of 1381. Davis has written about John Ball and the Peasant's revolt; see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/the-peasants-revolt-late-medieval-period-2-1350-1381/>.

²⁶ Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), nineteenth century social critics and political activists, originators of Communism. *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, was a short statement of their position. It is perhaps worth noting that Davis was an active democratic socialist.

January 14, 1940

"Dividing Lines"

64-113

Readings: Acts 7; Pliny²⁷; Emerson

Hymns: 32, 75, 308

Teacher in St. Paul's School

???: Concord to N.Y. on Boat

Stephen Foster²⁸

Old questions come up again. Ideas, emotions and values are not geographically conditioned. Where is the limit?

John Huss²⁹

²⁷ Davis likely refers to Pliny the Elder (c. 23- 79) Roman author, naturalist and natural philosopher.

²⁸ Stephen Collins Foster (1826-1864) American musician; known as the father of American music.

²⁹ Davis may refer to John Hus (1369-1415) Czech theologian and philosopher and Church reformer. Among other things he believed that women were given rights in the Bible, "Women were made in the image of God and should fear no man."

January 21, 1940

Reverend Charles E. Park, preacher

3-12: 63:113

Readings:

Hymns: 13, 148, 416

Sermon: Rev. Charles E. Park

January 28, 1940

Layman's Sunday

"The Layman and Democracy"

4-17. 62:112

Readings: Matthew 7:7-16; Emerson

Hymns: 28, 280, 314-15

Outline:

Three main Jobs

1. Bread + Butter: Industry
2. Adjustments: Political and State
3. Meaning: Religion, Church

February 4, 1940

Y.P.R.U.³⁰

"All in the Same Boat"

9-36. 58-110

Readings: 1 Samuel 10

Hymns: 47-45, 309, 290

Old picture, "Crossing the River"

The New Heart:

The power without

The power within

³⁰ Likely: Young People's Religious Union

February 11, 1940

The last Sunday before vacation.

"Arrested for Living"

2-8. 66-114

Readings: Matthew 25:31-46; G.C. 437

Hymns: 2, 294, 329

Some of the straight ways and narrow gates

Petersham: Historically; Petersham: Prophetic

Translating: Roads, Buildings

February 18, 1940³¹

Loomis School³²

"The Great Tradition"

Readings: Luke 9:28-36; *Great Companions*, 437³³

The story of the transfiguration. Its poetry.

Four young men in the face of a real situation

The interplay of forces

³¹ For the years 1938 through 1947 Davis collected his sermon notes in more-or-less annual hand-bound booklets. Most of these booklets were well-ordered and inclusive of only sermons from one particular year. The exception was the booklet of sermon notes for 1941, which was out of chronological order, and included sermon notes from multiple other years, 1934 through 1945. In all, only 30 of the 41 sermon notes were from 1941. The notes transcribed here were found in that collection, now returned to their correct year.

³² The Loomis School, now the Loomis Chaffee School, was—and is—an independent boarding school for high school students. Davis' third son, Byron (1912-1998), attended Loomis from 1930-1934.

³³ Almost certainly this refers to the book *Great Companions: Readings on the Meaning and Conduct of Life from Ancient and Modern Sources*, ed., Robert French Leavens, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1927. The passage on page 437 is "An Honest Lawyer" by Abraham Lincoln, in the section on "Vocations."

March 24, 1940

Easter, Order of Service.

Prelude, Easter Joy, Hosmer

Service for Easter 13-50

Hymn 196, "O Day of Light and Gladness"

Responsive Reading, "Seek ye the Lord"

Choir Response, 64-113

Scripture Readings and Prayer

From *The Nazarene*, Pages 271-2

Choir: All Creatures of Our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Kirchengesang, 1623

Offertory. The Resurrection. Shelley. Mr. Basil Coolidge³⁴

Hymn 195. "O Lord of Life"

Sermon. Horizons, Near and Far

Hymn 127. Abide with me.

Benediction.

Postlude, Festival March. Colkin

Distribution of plants

³⁴ Likely refers to Basil E. Coolidge, born 1904 and a resident of Petersham in 1940. Unclear why his name appears in connection with the Resurrection.

March 31, 1940

"A Principle of Protestantism"

Service 5-22. 63-113

Readings: Zechariah 4:1-10

Hymns: 28, 312, 408

Dedication of John Fiske, excursions of an evangelist³⁵

"Not by might, nor by my power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."³⁶

³⁵ Davis possibly refers to John Fiske (1842-1901) American philosopher and historian, vigorous defender of Darwinism and abolitionism.

³⁶ Zechariah 4:6.

April 7, 1940

"The Foundation of Belief"

1-3. 66-114

Readings: Acts 17

Hymns: 16, 274, 357

Our Lady of Lorette in Paris³⁷

Superstition. Religions

Mythe Williams: Speaker

White Owl Cigars: Sponsor

Truth

Raymond Swing³⁸: Philco.

³⁷ Likely refers to the Roman Catholic church in the 9th arrondissement of Paris, built between 1823 and 1836. The name, "Lorette" refers to a woman of loose morals.

³⁸ Davis possibly refers to Raymond Gram Swing (1887-1968) American print and broadcast journalist.

April 14, 1940

"Trust in God and Keep Your Powder Dry"

9-36. 62-112

Readings: Revelation 21

Hymns: 2, 63, 349:1-3

Sarton ??? P. 221.³⁹

³⁹ Possibly a reference to George Sarton (1884-1956) Belgian American chemist and historian, founder of the discipline of history of science. This could be a reference to his 1931 book, *The History of Science and the New Humanism*.

April 21, 1940

"What We Believe About Ourselves"

3-12. 58-110

Readings: Philippians 3:13-16; 4:8-9; Channing's Works,⁴⁰ page 36.

Hymns: 9, 250, 366

"To know is to be, these things are certain in this world; our own being, our own consciousness and our own will."

"The more one knows, the more wonderful the world seems, the greater the power, glory and perfection of God. Religion could have no higher object." *The Star-Gazer*, pp. 408-9.⁴¹

⁴⁰ William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) 19th Century American Unitarian Minister.

⁴¹ Paul Tabor and Zsolt De Harsanyi, 1939, *The Star-Gazer: A Novel of the Life of Galileo*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, pp. 408-9.

April 28, 1940

"A Belief in an Essential Christ: In the Fulness of Time"

4-17. 48-104

Readings: Isaiah 35; Soul of Man, Stanza 4

Hymns: 25 ???, 209, 190 ???

The Messiah, the Christ
Self-chosen or chosen of God

Are eternal ???
Knowledge, Wisdom

May 5, 1940

"Who is Messiah?"

1-3. 28-91

Readings: Matthew 11:1-6

Hymns: 47, 74, 315

Again: Not an event, but a process

"Out of Nazareth"

"We create our Christ."

Time of sowing.

Looks to time of reaping.

Kingdom of God

a. Is here.

b. Is coming.

c. Is within you.

May 12, 1940

"What We May Believe: Mutual Aid a Factor in Evolution"⁴²

2-8. 46-103

Readings:

Hymns: 2, 75, 321

Last Sunday I tried to point out that under a democratic order of society such as we try to become in this country, that the right of the individual carries with it the responsibility of the individual: "We should regard ourselves, each in his own place, and capacity, as messiahs, anointed ones, to use the Greek word, 'Christos.'"

Evolution: The first impact of the evolutionary idea was to emphasize the idea of importance of "the survival of the fit." But a short range view of the process led to a very primitive and barbaric thesis: Ruthlessness.

⁴² The sermon title references a book by Pyotr Kropotkin (1842-1921) *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, published in 1902. Kropotkin was a Russian political activist, scientist and philosopher. He was a proponent of a decentralized communist society and was disappointed with the results of the Bolshevik revolution. Davis was quite interested in his work. There are notes he took on Kropotkin's book; see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/notes-on-mutual-aid-a-factor-in-evolution-by-p-kropotkin-no-date/>. Additionally a short manuscript of the same title discussing mutual aid during the Great Depression; see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/mutual-aid-a-factor-in-evolution-1933/>.

May 19, 1940

"What We May Believe: Some Enduring Values: God"

3-12. 43-101

Readings: Matthew 7; Poem: Thy Kingdom Come⁴³

Hymns: 1, 27, 145

The dying past and the growing future

A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday where it is past.

1. We believe in ourselves.
2. We believe in some purpose (Messiah).
3. We believe in ourselves as Messiah.
4. We believe in mutual aid.
5. How deep-rooted in the nature of things are our beliefs of values?

⁴³ Very possibly John Bowring's (1792-1872) poem, "Thy Kingdom Come" in John Bowring, *A Memorial Volume of Sacred Poetry*, selected and with a memoir of the author by Lady Deborah Bowring, London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1873, p. 15.

May 26, 1940

Union Service in Unitarian Church

Sermon: Reverend James T. Carter

Service: 16-64. 64-113

Hymns: 133, 384, 54

June 2, 1940

"That God May Exist: The Great Hunger"

1-3. 63-113

Readings: Psalm 84; Matthew 26:36-50

Hymns: 25, 190, 54

Out on the promontory of existence. The new era of Christianity was really born in the Garden of Gethsemane.

All these incidents are not just events, but continuing processes. "Life itself is not easy and ???". We deal with Titanic Forces."

[Not] "Over there" "In them"
But "here and now" "and in us."

Men thinking.

June 9, 1940

"Simeon"⁴⁴

2-8. 59-110

Hymns: 35, 74, 438

⁴⁴ See Luke 2:25-35

June 16, 1940

Union Service at North Church: Graduation Sunday

E.C.D. Preacher

"The Adventure of Thinking. Youth"

1-3. 63-113

Readings: Psalm 84; Matthew 7:7-12

Hymns:

Newb??? ??? ???

Meaning of this day:

To you

To us

Freedom. Decision. Responsibility.
Pushing out of the nest to carry on.

Great church of witnesses
Builder of Petersham

Integrity of Person
Integrity of Family

Do not be afraid of life.

1. Work hard
2. Play decently
3. Out of this incompleteness

June 23, 1940

"A Higher Liberty"

4-17. 20-86

Readings: Luke 6:1-5

Hymns: 32, 294, 329

Latin. Greek. Bible sayings.

On this same day Jesus saw a man working on the sabbath etc.

Last sayings of Jesus:

Man in God's image

God in Man's image.

1. Disillusion.
2. Morals
3. Religion: Idea of God

June 30, 1940

At this service Bibles given to Church School, and High School graduates and others [who] joined the church.

"The Undercurrent of Life"

V-22. 64-113

Readings: 1 Kings 19:9-12; Acts 2:1-4

Hymns: 47, 337, 407

Captains Courageous, Kipling⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) English novelist. His book, *Captains Courageous* was published in 1897. It tells the story of Harvey Cheyne, son of an American millionaire, after he fell overboard from a luxury liner and was rescued by the crew of a fishing ship. His adventures ensue.

July 7, 1940

"Sand, Grit and Light"

1-3. 66-114

Readings: Matthew 13:24-34; Robertson

Hymns: 45, 69, 315

Fog, Carl Sandburg.⁴⁶

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Vagrant sayings of Jesus.

"The seeker should not rest until he finds that which he seeks;
but when he finds it he will wonder; but when he has wondered he
will be master; but when he is master he will find rest."⁴⁷

From Egyptian papyrus, and one very ancient Church father who
relates that it comes from a Hebrew Gospel.

Fog and doubt.

Distant and familiar landmarks are obscured.
Turn to nearby things.

Sand. Out on sand -glass. Light.
Quartz crystal. Clear. Definite shape. Prism, lens

Four steps:

1. That which he seeks.
2. He will wonder.
3. He will be master.
4. He will find rest. (Peace)

⁴⁶ Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) American poet. His poem, "Fog," was first published in 1916.

⁴⁷ A variant of a passage from the Book of Thomas.

July 14, 1940

"Thirty Weavers of Worcester"⁴⁸

1-3. 66-114

Readings: Mark 4:21:30; Channing, page 177, Religion Live Life;⁴⁹
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, B.V. Lines 469-485⁵⁰

Hymns: 17, 76, 362

Our responsibility for the preservation of values we cherish.

Settlement: planting, and caring for spots of civilized ways of life.

The ramparts we guard; the values we cherish.

Responsibility

Gun over every mantle.

Bible in every home.

⁴⁸ In 1165 Thirty Weavers of Worcester were banished—to their deaths—as heretics. See the sermon above for November 26, 1939. Davis discusses this history in his "Rise and Development of the Congregational Polity and Spirit: Lecture II: Earliest Traces of Congregational Churches," see <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/lecture-ii-earliest-traces-of-congregational-churches/>.

⁴⁹ William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) prominent early 19th century Unitarian preacher. Unfortunately, I do not know which volume is being referenced here.

⁵⁰ John Milton (1608-1674) English poet. "Paradise Lost" is his epic poem first published in 1667. The lines Davis references may begin with the following:

O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,

...

July 21, 1940

"An Old Parable Retold"

3rd 12. Litany 14

Readings: Luke 10:11-31; Emerson from ???, page 228.

Hymns: 1, 136, 245

Occasion: Fog illustration: Living at meadow water where the fog is made.

Different question: God and Freedom. Evil and Freedom

Parable of the Prodigal son.

Younger son. Fog all about. Restless.

Wanted to see the world.

No limits

Change of figure.

Groping for light

Turn in the light.

Touching human values.

Here and there

Rennet

July 28, 1940

"There and Back: Faith, Responsibility and Decision"

Readings: Exodus 3; Miracles at Milton, *Reader's Digest*, Jan,
1940, p. 33

Hymns: 25, 224, 308

Elements: 4: Fire, Water, Earth, Air

70

92

No. 85-87

Nothing in nature says, "No."

Everything is positive.

Seek.

Ask.

Knock.

August 3, 1940

"Disciples and Followers"

Readings: John 10:10-16; From *The Nazarene*, page 247

Hymns: 23, 546, 289

The Task Immediate
Story of the shepherd.
Humble tasks.

1. Moses: the great tradition
2. "One sheep in the storm"

"Turning the current of history."

August 11, 1940

"Not Magic but Life"

Readings: Genesis 6:1-4; John 5-X; Frost's Birches⁵¹

Hymns: 14, 309, 470

"Good" not simply an accident of chemical atoms, but rooted in the nature of things.

1. The impact of a "Good Life upon us."

⁵¹ Robert Frost (1874-1963) American poet. His poem, *Birches*, was first published in the August 1915 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

August 18, 1940

Worcester Federation of Y.P. [Young People]

9—with Litany

"As One to Another"

Readings: Luke 9:28-35; "Dare You," Edward Sill⁵²

Hymns: 10, 483, 277

1. Independent
2. Liberal
3. Progressive

⁵² Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887) American Poet. His poem, "Dare You," begins with the lines:

Doubting Thomas and loving John,
Behind the others walking on:--
"Tell me now, John, dare you be
One of the minority?"

...

The full poem can be found in Edward Rowland Sill, *Poems*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889, p. 56.

August 25, 1940

"Enter in by the Narrow Way"

4--

Readings: Luke 8:4-15; E Eittale, The Nameless Saints

Hymns: 16, 190, 311

"Consider an eon of cases. Nature is profligate but exacting and concrete."

Saying of Christ. The product of keen observation.

If we have become soft, flabby.

Reformation without tarrying for any.⁵³

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."⁵⁴

⁵³ This is the title of a pamphlet by Robert Browne (1550-1633). Davis gave a sermon of this title in 1917-18. See <https://wordpress.clarku.edu/dbaird/sermon-reformation-without-tarrying-for-any/>.

⁵⁴ Matthew 7: 13-14.

December 22, 1940⁵⁵

Order of Service

Prelude: Marche des Mages. Dubois

Service. Christmas. #12

Hymn 163

Scripture. Matthew 2, and 13-54ff. Luke 4:16-24

Choir. Angels We Have Heard on High. Old French Melody

Offertory

Choir. O Come Ye Happy Children. Old French Carol

Hymn 162

Sermon. Faith Leads On.

Right Hand of Fellowship

Hymn 166

Benediction

Nunc Demittis

Postlude. Hallelujah Chorus. Handel's Messiah

Outline.

An Event. Mary and Joseph

A Process, in life

Is not this the carpenter's son.

Christmas Carol

Napoleon and singing peasants

There an age being born

Not alone Jesus, but the

Children who were to become his followers, disciples

⁵⁵ For the years 1938 through 1947 Davis collected his sermon notes in more-or-less annual hand-bound booklets. Most of these booklets were well-ordered and inclusive of only sermons from one particular year. The exception was the booklet of sermon notes for 1941, which was out of chronological order, and included sermon notes from multiple other years, 1934 through 1945. In all, only 30 of the 41 sermon notes were from 1941. The notes transcribed here were found in that collection and are returned here to the correct year.

December 22, 1940

Vesper Service and Pageant, 4:15 P.M.

Organ.

A Heavenly Song is Sung. Swiss Folk Song
All my Heart This Night Rejoices. Ebeling

Sentences, invocation, Lord's Prayer

Hymn 162

Reading: Luke 2:1-21

Names of children born or Christened in the Parish during the year.

Hymn 174. The First Nowell

(Announce at this time the hymn to be sung at close of the Pageant)

Hymn 163

(Minister goes to rear of Church)

(All lights out)

Pageant

Organ. Angels in the night. Motet.

Angels from the Realm of Glory

When candles are lighted and boys in place

Organ

Adesta Fideles

Enter Pageant. Singing Adesta

Enter Mary and Angels

One stanza, Holy Night

Violin, Ava Maria

Pageant and congregation sing, Joy to the World

(Elec. Lights in rear only.)

Recessional. Light out

Benediction from rear.