

Booklet of Sermon Notes

Earl C. Davis

Petersham, MA

1941¹

May 25, 1941

Union Memorial Service

Prelude.

Call to Worship—Doxology

Invocation—Lord's Prayer

Hymn 25: High in the heavens

Responsive Reading 79, Gloria Patri

Scripture Reverend Earl Davis

Anthem

Pastoral Prayer

Announcements and Offertory

Solo

Hymn 361 O Master let me walk with Thee

Sermon: Reverend Earl C. Davis

Hymn 555 Ten Thousand Times

Benediction

¹ 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. Here are these 30 sermon notes in chronological order.

Postlude
June 1, 1941

Exchange with Robert Schacht, Providence R.I.²

"Men of Faith in Every Age"

Readings: Isaiah 52:12-53:9; Matthew 7:7-14 or Matthew 4:26-29;
M. Arnold's "We Cannot Kindle"³

Hymns: 54, 311

"When the fruit is ripe."

The birth of Christianity, as we look back upon it, was one of those great events in human history, perhaps the greatest, when the time had come to sow some of the choice seeds that had been gained from experiences of the past.

Isaiah is the record of a new thought dawning on the mind of man.

Jesus picks it up.

The Seed: Its merit is not:

- a. In the producer: G???
- b. In the distributor: church
- c. In the seed catalog: Bible

² Dr. Robert Schacht was the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Providence from 1921 until 1968.

³ Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) English poet and cultural critic. His poem, "Morality," has the first line, "We cannot kindle when we will."

June 8, 1941

"The Long View"

2-8 Litany

Reading: Nehemiah 2; 4:15-23

Hymn Numbers: 27, 337, 438

The Servant Passage

Poetry and Prophecy

Nehemiah, not a prophet, but a doer.

Single track-minded

Doing more than one thing at the same time

Notes for sermon "The Long View"

June 11, 1842, at a meeting of the Worcester Association of Ministers, a resolution was passed calling for a meeting in the Autumn for the purpose of awakening mutual sympathy and considering the wants of the Unitarian body.

These autumnal meetings were held each year until 1863, when the demands of the Civil War broke them up.

First one held in Worcester, October 18-20, 1842.

Third held in Albany, N.Y. At this Albany meeting Dr. Orville Dewey said,

This and other conventions like it that are held in our body, I am inclined to think, have never been held before in the world. There is nothing like them to be found in the records of ecclesiastical history. We meet as distinct churches, on the pure democratic basis, which we believe to be the true basis of the Church of Christ. We meet without any formalities—to institute or correct no canons—without the slightest system whatever. We come to meditate, to assist each other in experience, by

unfolding our own experience, by declaring our own convictions. Cooke's *Unitarianism in America*, page 174.⁴

⁴ George Willis Cooke (1848-1923) American Unitarian minister and writer, best known for his book, *Unitarianism in America: A History of its Origin and Development*, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1902.

June 29, 1941

"A Living Church"

Service 5--Litany

Readings: Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 12:1-5

Hymn Numbers: 16, 407, 393

Servant in the home

Religion and church

"Lives"

Church

Dead

Dying

Being born

July 6, 1941

Soability

"The Kingdom Yet to Be"

2-30 Litany

Readings: Isaiah 32:1-8, 13-20; Faith for Living, page 233

Hymn Numbers: 25, 76, 362

The dramatic spectacle of America taking Oath of Allegiance,
Salute to Flag

July 13, 1941

"Incompleteness"

2-8

Readings: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 12:28-34, 41-44

Hymn Numbers: 32, 136, 408

Truth

These passages of scripture represent these efforts of men to tie together into a connected whole the world as they see and experience it, and their effort to give that whole world an honest and true character.

"Michael, do you not hear the divine message which calls you to church to assist the priest in his serve at the altar of God?"

The New Reformation, Page 247, Michael Pupin⁵

⁵ Mihajlo Pupin, aka Michael Pupin (1854-1935) Serbian American physicist and prolific inventor. His book, *The New Reformation: From Physical to Spiritual Realities*, New York: Scribner's Sons, was published in 1927. This quote can also be found in Albert Edward Wiggam, "Science Is Leading Us Closer to God: An Interview with Michael Pupin, the distinguished scientist," *American Magazine*, Volume 144, September 1927, p. 24

July 20, 1941

"By the Slow Forces of Growth"

3-12

Hymn Numbers: 17, 208, 311

Readings: Luke 17:20-21; Romans 12

"And being asked by the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, 'Lo here! Or lo there!' for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."⁶

Romans 12

We have to live within the world that is.

Dr. Collyer: Heaven may be my home. Chicago, where I live.

Thy neighbor as thyself.

Thénardier in *Les Misérables*⁷

⁶ Luke 17:20-21.

⁷ *Les Misérables*, a 1862 novel by Victor Hugo (1802-1885).
Monsieur Thénardier is a former inn keeper who will do anything for money.

July 27, 1941

"The Slow Process of Discovery"

4-17 Litany

Readings: John 4:19-26, 32-39; Letter of Mrs. J.G. Adams to her son⁸

Hymns: 67, 85-83, 145; Evening 280, 360

Not Revelation but Discovery

The early Christian world was not simple and of single purpose.

Samaritans

Tolerance and fidelity to "Thy God;" Not coercion. Pharisees. Love. Spirit and in truth. In life and in reality.

Clipping from 7/18/41 *New York Times*, "Rabies Warning for Baby"

"Police of 9 States Seek family to tell of infant's danger.

The police of nine Eastern States including New York and New Jersey, were asked yesterday by the police of Oklahoma City, Okla., to locate Mr. and Mrs. H.H. Hudson, and their two daughters, one an infant, presumed to be traveling by automobile between New York and Washington, to notify Mr. Hudson to get rabies treatment for his infant daughter. Since the Hudsons have left Oklahoma City, the child's pet cat has died from rabies, according to the alarm.

In requesting New York City police to join in the search, the Oklahoma City authorities said the family was riding in a 1941 sedan, bearing Oklahoma registration 2-38-860. Mr. Hudson is asked to telephone C. Tangner at Oklahoma City 5-8954."

⁸ It is difficult to determine what this refers to. Mrs. J.G. Adams may be the wife of John Greenleaf Adams (1810-1897) a Universalist minister and author.

July 27, 1941

"The Slow Process of Discovery"

Preached at the old Chestnut Hill Meeting House, Millville, MA
at 3:30PM

Readings: John 4:19-26, 32-39

July 30, 1941

Isles of Shoals

Round Table Discussion on S.N.E.C., 5-6PM

Chapel at 10PM

Readings, John

August 3, 1941

"In Thy Will is Our Peace"

1 Litany

Readings: Psalm 42

Hymn Numbers: 49, 99, 261

G.C., Page 505, Matt. Arnold⁹

"Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until we find rest in thee. In thy will is our peace."
St. Augustine¹⁰

In the long journey from that curious and terrible world of theological dogma, towards a promised land. One of the great mile posts was the discovery that even in unregenerate men there may be disinterested benevolence.

⁹ "G.C." refers to the book, *Great Companions: Readings on the Meaning and Conduct of Life from Ancient and Modern Sources*, edited by R.F. Leavens, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1927. On pages 505-7 there is a poem by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) English poet and cultural critic, "Leaders and Friends of Mankind."

¹⁰ Augustine of Hippo (354-430) Berber theologian and philosopher. This quote is from his *Confessions* written between 397 and 400.

August 10, 1941

2-8 100 Psalm

Readings: Psalm 103; Songs of K??? XL, XLIII

Hymn Numbers: 8, 54, 371

September 11, 1893: World Parliament of Religion

August 17, 1941

Reverend Sumner Mitchell of Brookfield and Sanford, Maine,
preached.¹¹

Cold: Did not go to Berkshire.

¹¹ Reverend Sumner Mitchel (1874-1949) was the minister of the Sanford, Maine Unitarian church when he came to Petersham to preach.

August 24, 1941

"The Keys to the Kingdom"

4-17 Litany

Readings: James 1:19-27; 3:13-18; A. J. Cronin, *The Keys to the Kingdom*, pages 319-20.¹²

Hymn Numbers: 9, 208, 337

Best seller. Why?

- | | | |
|--------------|--|-------|
| 1. Patience | | |
| 2. Quietness | | Faith |
| 3. Courage | | |

Notices:

Church School Union Picnic, Tuesday August 26:

Leave the church at 10. ???

Packard Heights

New Sunday Dr. Griffin will be the preacher in this church.

Concert tonight in the Memorial Hall, Library Building.

[On the back side of this sheet:]

Church School Open Next Sunday at 9:45

¹² Archibald Joseph Cronin (1896-1981) Scottish physician and novelist. Influenced the creation of the National Health Service in Britain. His 1941 book, *The Keys to the Kingdom*, New York: Little Brown, tells the story of Father Francis Chisholm a Scottish Priest who works to establish a mission in China.

August 31, 1941

F. R. Griffin preacher¹³

5-22 Litany 24

Hymn Numbers: 32, 145, 399, St. Agnes 241

¹³ Frederick R. Griffin (1877-1966) long a leader in the Unitarian Universalist Association. In 1933 he recommended the merger of and the Unitarian and Universalist denominations, which was completed in 1961. Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia from 1917 to 1947.

September 7, 1941

"The Instinct of Curiosity and Where it Leads Us"

1-Litany

Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Job 42:1-6; Matthew 13:31-32

Hymns: 1, 138, 272

Jeremiah is record, not of Revelation

1. But a new discovery, "The New Covenant"
2. It was being made in a period of great distress and gloom.
3. Jeremiah parable: Mustard Seed

Curiosity: Immediate: Instinct of

But it becomes in the most complete and sublime form the prelude
to wonder

September 14, 1941

"The Menace of Dictatorships, And the Way Out"

2-8.

Readings: Luke 16:19-31; Romans 12

Hymns: 28, 280, 360

The love more + the Prophets

History

September 21, 1941

"Superstition and Idol Worshipping"

3-12

Readings: Luke 12:22-34, 34-39

Hymns: 25, 69, 248

2nd Commandment¹⁴

What is it?

"Standing over something in amazement and awe"

Confusing as to cause and effect: Things which happen at about the same time.

"Standing over" while the world rolls on through time and space.

¹⁴ See Exodus 20:4. In Romans 1:18-32 John writes of the tendency toward idolatry, contrary to the second commandment which prohibits the fashioning of idols.

September 28, 1941

"Not Yours but You: Not Dogma but Personality"

4-17 Litany 28

Hymns: 47, 384=224, 272

Readings: Proverbs 8:20-36; Matthew 7:6-12; Romans 8:38-39;
Emerson's Transition, p. 342¹⁵

¹⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) founder of American transcendentalism. I am not sure what volume this refers to.

October 5, 1941

Christening Service

"The Feel of Belonging"

5-22.

Readings: Isaiah 41:1-10; Philippians 3:12-16

Hymns: 28, 260, 438

Lewis Mumford.¹⁶

The Land.

The Person.

The Home.

To the Land;

To the home: Family;

To the community:

To the whole: Religion

1. Security.

2. Achievement: Works

The Balance between Belonging and domination

¹⁶ Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) American historian, sociologist, and philosopher of technology. Mumford authored many books. Here Davis is likely drawing on his 1934 *Technics and Civilization* and his 1938 *The Culture of Cities*.

October 12, 1941

Exchange with Max Savage.¹⁷

Preached in Worcester on

"Not Yours but You"

See Notes and outline for Sept 28, '41.

¹⁷ Max Savage (1876-???) was the minister of the First Unitarian Church of Worcester from 1919 until 1946.

October 19, 1941

"An Eternal Cornerstone: Freedom Speaks in Us"

3rd 12 Litany 14

Readings: Matthew 7:24-29; M.R.O. 123-4

Hymns: 27, 207 3/3, 314:315

Dig down to the solid rock

Hero = Free soul

The Garden of Gethsemane

From an office to Gethsemane

October 26, 1941¹⁸

"Out of Exile"

4-

Readings: Soul of Bible, page 67-8¹⁹; Acts 9:1-9: Victor Hugo's
William Shakespeare,²⁰ page 294-95

Hymns: 16, 241, 351

Dramatic incidents of Life

Traveling by night. Over well-marked highways

3. Witness of experience. Someone has gone before
2. Skill of ambulance driver: in the darkness
1. Daniel Boone²¹ in the wilderness, Deerslayer²²

Saul: Anointed

Paul: Anointed

Victor Hugo

Trust our sensible and reasonable attitude

¹⁸ On the back of this sheet is the note: "Two weeks from today is Union Thanksgiving."

¹⁹ *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 67-8 is a version of 1 Samuel 10, Ezekiel 36.

²⁰ Victor Hugo (1802-1885) French romantic writer. His 1864 book, *William Shakespeare* concerns the writers that Hugo considered the greatest geniuses of all time.

²¹ Daniel Boone (1734-1820) American pioneer and frontiersman.

²² *The Deerslayer* is an 1841 book by James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) American novelist.

November 2, 1941

"Ourselves and Our Children: Education for Life"

1-2 R.R. 59-p.110

Readings: Galatians 5:6-10; Ruskin²³ Gothic

Hymns: 88, 34, 140, 314

Discipline: Habits

The backward look

The forward look

The process

²³ John Ruskin (1819-1900) English writer, philosopher, art critic.

November 5-6, 1941²⁴

Senexet²⁵

Mrs. Williams and Trees

1. Marked characteristics
 - a. Whole personality
 - b. Reserve
2. Among the trees

The Tree: Not a thing, but had qualities and characteristics of their own to be respected and, if possible, understood.

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."²⁶

Not sentimental.

Prof. Cline, Survey of the stand.

A good listener.

Picture.

"Be still and know that I am God."²⁷

Trees become individualized

Mystic strain

Her whole personality went out to life, but it was her disciplined and intelligent...

²⁴ On the back side of the first Senexet sheet: "Alliance, Thursday 5, 2:30; Rev. James T. Carter; Historical Meeting; Union Thanksgiving Service: Next Sunday, North Church."

²⁵ 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/>.

²⁶ Genesis 2:9.

²⁷ Psalm 46:10.

November 9, 1941

"We Confess Our Sins"

9th

Armistice Day

Readings: Luke 17:11-21, 18:9-17; Emerson, G.C. page 241²⁸

Hymns: 10, 280, 311

1. This story of the healing of the ten lepers has a point. But the point is not the miracle of healing, but the fact that only the despised Samaritan gave thanks.
2. The Kingdom of God: within you.

²⁸ "G.C." refers to the book, *Great Companions: Readings on the Meaning and Conduct of Life from Ancient and Modern Sources*, edited by R.F. Leavens, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1927. On pages 241-2 there is an excerpt of the essay, "Self Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) founder of American Transcendentalism.

November 16, 1941²⁹

A Thanksgiving of Faith

Union Thanksgiving Service at North Church

E.C.D. Sermon

"Binders: Yours and Mine"

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11-14; Galatians 5:25-6:10; Mayflower Compact

Thanksgiving, not merely for harvests, but for buds of next year's seeds.

Children

Union Thanksgiving Service, Morning Service

Prelude.

Call to Worship—Doxology

Invocation—Lord's Prayer

Hymn 599: Come ye thankful people

Responsive Reading 51, Gloria Patri

Scripture Reverend Earl Davis

Anthem

Pastoral Prayer

Offertory

Hymn 349 When all thy mercies, V 1-5-6-7

Sermon: Reverend Earl C. Davis

Hymn 598 We plough the fields

Benediction

Brooks, Bane, Tuesday, ??? at 8 O'clock Vestry

²⁹ On the back of this sheet, "Coming to Christmas."

November 23, 1941

"Adventure and Discovery"

4 Litany

Readings: Ephesians 6:5-20; Emerson, "Be of good cheer"³⁰

Hymns: 63, 349-???, 312

Every person

The Santa Fe Trail:

 Picture in Life

St. Paul at Ephesus

³⁰ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) American transcendentalist. His poem, "Be of good cheer, brave spirit; steadfastly" can be found in his *Poems: New and Revised Edition*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890, pp. 332-3.

November 30, 1941

"Time Moves On"

Service 5

Readings: Isaiah 61; Luke 4:16-20

Hymns: 54, 151, 75

Advent

December 7, 1941³¹

"A Record of Discovery: The Bible"

1 -- Litany

Readings: Jefferson Bible³²

Hymns: 16, 272, 289

C.

"The New Roof."

³¹ These sermon notes for December 7, 1941 somehow got bound with the sermon notes for 1942-1943. I did not remove them, and they appear there clearly out of place. I have added a copy of them with the 1941 sermon notes here and in the scan.

³² Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) Second President of the United States. On his own, Jefferson extracted and reorganized elements of the Gospels to create what has come to be known as the *Jefferson Bible*. It is available: Thomas Jefferson, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1951. The work was done over several years, but first compiled by Jefferson during the winter of 1804-05. The first English publication was not until 1902.

December 14, 1941

"Religious Liberty"

7th

Readings: Channing;³³ Sermon on the Mount;³⁴ Jefferson's Bible,
pp.10-11³⁵

Hymns: 173, 154, 294

Separation of Church and State

A Bill of rights

Article One: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."³⁶

³³ William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) Important 19th century Unitarian preacher.

³⁴ See Matthew 5-7.

³⁵ Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) Second President of the United States. On his own, Jefferson extracted and reorganized elements of the Gospels to create what has come to be known as the *Jefferson Bible*. It is available: Thomas Jefferson, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1951. The work was done over several years, but first compiled by Jefferson during the winter of 1804-05. The first English publication was not until 1902. Unfortunately, I do not have the edition Davis was working from and cannot identify the passages from "pp. 10-11."

³⁶ First Amendment to the Constitution.

December 21, 1941

Morning Service

Prelude. The Madrigal, Simonetti

Service for Christmas. Page 45

Hymn 155

Scripture Matthew 2:1-11

Duet: Jesu Bambino, Jean Hendry & Edith Hudson

Litany and Prayer, Sp. M. 2

Offertory

Notices

Special Music 3

Hymn 165

Sermon

Christening

Hymn 438

Hymn 166

Benediction

Postlude

Sermon: "In the Days of Herod the King"

63 B.C.: Quarrel of two Maccabeans of Kingdom

Pompey: The Roman stepped in and took over the Jewish
nation.

Herod, an Edomite, begged to be made King.

Herod ???

Vesper Pageant Dec. 21, 1941, 4:15 P.M.

Organ.

The Light of Bethlehem. Abt
The Light of God. Mozart

Sentences, Invocation Lord's Prayer

Hymn 162 It Cam Upon the Midnight Clear.

Reading: Luke 2:1-21

Names of children born or Christened during the year, more
or less in the Parish

Hymn 174. The First Nowell

(Announcements at this time the hymn 163 to be sung at
close of the Pag.)
(Minister goes to rear of Church)

All lights out

Pageant

Lighting the Candles

Organ.

Christ Child, Nickols
The Guiding Star, Nickols

(When candles are lighted and boys are at stations)

Organ plays Adesta Fidelas Through.

Doors are opened, Pageant enters singing Adesta Fideles.

Stand in front, finishing hymn, while Madonna and angles enter.

Then singers move to stations, and all the Pageant join in
singing one stanza of Silent Night.

Singing of Ave Maria

The Pageant then moves to front.

Lights in rear go on.

Pageant and Congregation join in singing Joy to the World, Hymn
163.

Benediction from the Rear.