

# A SERMON FOR SUNDAY

SUBJECT: "WHAT ARE THE PERMANENT ELEMENTS OF RELIGION?"

An Eloquent and Forceful Discourse by the Rev. John M. Davidson—Man's Interest in the Incarnation—A Striking Thought About the "Divinity of Man."

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—In the Fourth Unitarian Church, Flatbush, Sunday morning, the pastor, the Rev. John M. Davidson, preached on "What Are the Permanent Elements of Religion?" He said:

In this period of questioning, when old structures of religious faith are being torn down and new ones are taking their place, when what seems the very foundation of faith is being removed here and there to make way for new material, it is well worth our while to ask the question that is consequent upon such a condition. What elements of our religious faith are permanent and are likely to resist the tendency to change? It is a question that is agitating more people than ever before in history. We have been told that there is a growing indifference to religion, that men are abandoning the churches, that paganism has re-absorbed large sections of the country, even Puritan New England sharing in the general dissolution.

No one can deny that the influence of the church is not as great as it was when almost the only educated men were ministers. We who occupy the pulpits today frankly recognize the fact that the occupants of the pews are not only our equals in intellect, but are actually giving us instruction in many departments of thought wherein the minister of old time was held to be supreme. The minister of today must be a man of relatively changed condition. He addresses minds at least as well informed and as bright as his own—and on many subjects more so. And he is not to be content with what he does not welcome the change as an advantage to himself and his work rather than a detriment. Nevertheless, for the time being, the condition which is bringing down the church attendance figures and to lessen the church's influence. It will continue to do so until the church finds men who are leaders (if not in intellect) in the effort for social amelioration. They must be specialists and authorities in their field, as the physicians and lawyers are in medicine and jurisprudence.

That the temporary falling off in the influence of the church as an institution argues for an indifference to religion I do not believe. The church has not yet lost its work. It is still doing its work in theology and philosophy, when men are more interested in the one than the other. Both theology and philosophy are vital matters, but the church is not discussing these subjects as yet. It is not interested in the one than the other. The scientific age, until science and the new methods of investigation have entered into and vitiated theology and philosophy, they will cease to interest or influence men. But a comparatively small sect with its interests, but men are interested in religion. This very questioning and unrest proves it. Even the return to paganism, as it has been called, is a trend, particularly noticeable in rural New England, away from the formalism of the church and back to nature, it is not so alarming as appears at first glance. We are learning to see that, although for centuries we have called certain people "pagans," thinking to give them a bad name and so to avoid more serious religion into the character of these same people, we have much to learn about religion, and we may not seldom sit with profit at the feet of a pagan prophet. Men are asking whether, in a comparative study, small sect is right and all the rest wrong, or whether there is not a bit of truth in them all. They go further. They ask now whether man is free, and if not, how free; they are wondering whether, after all, salvation is to be found with one and universal destruction with the other, whether the great end of all religion is to make one of them his favorite, to give that one a true and final revelation and to withhold it from all others. Men are going even further than this, they are questioning. They are putting the religions side by side for comparison. They are inquiring whether or not the truth that is in one religion is to be found really in another, and they are finding through this comparative study of religions that, at bottom, all are alike. Great areas of parallel beliefs and aspirations are found making the claim of exclusive revelation ridiculous. In fact, when it is found that every single form of religion on the face of the earth lays claim to an exclusive revelation of some sort, we find that the term "heretic" is merely an expression of one man's, or group of men's, point of view, we begin to open our eyes to the fact that our own past time in this matter may not carry so much weight as we had thought.

The discoveries that we have made during the last century about the habits of life and the character of thought of the other half of the world, the scientific methods of investigation into the subject of religion, its origin, rise and development, they, into religious literatures, and among them our own Bible, are broadening in view, even while, and perhaps because, they disturb our conceptions of religion. It is given a new interest. We find that the Christians are not the only members of God's family, and that there are others who care for Him as much as we do, and whom He loves as greatly as He loves us. I say that this is the tendency of men's minds today. Hardly do the most of us admit to ourselves that we are an accomplished fact, even to ourselves, in many localities the old exclusiveness is as impregnable as ever it was in the dark ages. Universally, where religious exclusiveness is found it is accompanied, and safeguarded by some form of claims to final revelation or final authority for truth—some authority that guarantees that the doctrine preached in that church in that beginning is now and ever shall be preached without change, world without end. That such claim is manifestly impossible to substantiate has never deterred the church from making it. It is one recognition—though a weak one—that absolute truth is unchangeable, and every religion and every church that claims to have a final and true revelation must, of course, claim to possess a knowledge of that "absolute" which Spencer calls "unknowable." Not one such body could so much as hold and lay hold on the great affirmation of to-day, that the faith of to-day is but the stepping stone to the faith of to-morrow; that revelation is not sealed; that truth is a living thing, growing as we grow; that mankind is saved through perpetual evolution from lower to higher, or, in other words, by fulfilling the meted destiny of becoming perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect. Our business to-day is frankly to admit that the final revelation is yet far off and that we have by no means found the "absolute" truth. The knowledge of to-day is but a little section of that absolute. The thing for us to remember, and to take courage from remembering, is that we are here to enlarge, and that we are enlarging, that section of knowledge.

I have said that whatever religious exclusiveness is found it is accompanied by some kind of authority purporting to guarantee the permanency and integrity of its faith. The creed has been changed from its original meaning—"credo, I believe"—to an imperative—"thou shalt believe." From being a simple statement of an individual faith it has become a formal statement of a system of dogma to which who would be saved must subscribe. No latitude is allowed for individual interpretations or for the growth of religious and theological conceptions. The aim is

# KEYSTONE STATE COLLINGS

FOUGHT TO ESCAPE.

An Italian Charged With Murder Arrested at Greensburg After a Desperate Struggle.

After being sheltered in the Italian colony for two days Donato Panello, charged with the murder of Grigoria Pariello, at Newark, N. J., last Saturday, was arrested in Greensburg by Chief of Police A. K. Hutchinson. Panello resisted arrest and he was only taken into custody after a furious struggle, in which he attempted to use a knife. He was identified by a scar upon his head, inflicted by the man he is alleged to have killed. He does not deny that he is the man wanted, but claims he did not know that his victim died.

M. R. Seybert, of Carlisle, Clarion county, committed suicide on a train, between Oil City and Emonton. Seybert swallowed carbolic acid. He was accompanied by his two sons, and boarded the train at Buffalo. Shortly after leaving Oil City he went into the closet and swallowed the contents of an orange bottle of poison. Returning to his sons why they thought of going to die, and collapsed on the seat. The body was taken off at Emonton and forwarded to Carlisle. Seybert was about 62 years old. No cause assigned for the act.

President Mitchell has ordered all the available organizers and speakers of the anthracite workers to the soft coal regions of Western Pennsylvania, where they will endeavor to get the bituminous men in line for a strike which is expected within a short time. The mine workers say that the soft coal operators are determined not to renew the scale, which expires in April, and that an effort will be made to reduce wages.

At Kittanning, Augustus Troutwein was sentenced to be hanged for the killing of his wife. When asked if he had anything to say why his sentence should not be passed he arose, and in a trembling voice said that when he had seen his wife in the arms of an Italian and the latter kissing her, that he lost his head, and without realizing what he was doing pulled his revolver and shot her.

George, an 18-year-old son of Stephen Welsh of East, was drowned in the Beaver River, Youngs Bay, with his older brother and another boy, was skating. He broke through the ice, and although his brother tried hard to rescue him, he was unsuccessful. The body was found about 10 feet away from the place Welsh broke through.

The maintenance of the present scale for pick mining, but a substantial increase in the growing and day labor, are demanded by the convention of sub-district No. 2, United Mine Workers of America, in its second day session in Lilly. These demands will be presented to the operators at the March meeting of the district in Altoona.

By the will of Mrs. Tracy Boyd, late of West Finley township, Washington county, \$1,000 is given to benevolences, \$300 each to the foreign and home mission boards of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, \$300 to the Windy Gap Cumberland Presbyterian church and \$100 to its Sunday school.

Word was received by the county commissioners from Harrisburg announcing that the request of the local authorities to have the State build the Moravia bridge, over the Beaver river, which was destroyed by the recent flood, had been granted. Five viewers were appointed.

It was announced that the Standard Steel Car company of Butler had secured orders for 3,500 cars from East-end railroads. As a result the works will start full time beginning March 1, giving employment to about 2,500 men, instead of about 900, as at present.

The postoffice at Cresson was broken into by five burglars who exploded the safe and secured \$110. In a battle with a number of citizens, who were attracted by the explosion, about 50 shots were fired. One of the burglars is supposed to have been wounded.

Deputy Coroner R. W. Brown has succeeded in establishing the identity of the stranger killed at Shenango by an Erie train. Papers were found in his possession giving his name as George Dickey. His residence is either in Chicago or Seattle, Wash.

The Rev. James Young, aged 88 years, is dead at his home at North Hope. He was the oldest minister in Butler county, and for 60 years was in the pulpit for the Methodist Episcopal Church. He leaves a family.

The body of Frank Wilson, who fell down a coal mine shaft, when the town, has been found. When the work of rescue began there was 80 feet of water above the body.

# SCIENCE NOTES.

Of all criminals in prison 55 percent are between the ages of 21 and 40.

A shell from a 12-inch gun makes its flight of nine miles in 42 seconds.

Only 54 percent of Germany's young men are fit for military service. Dr. Stricker finds that heart disease has increased 300 percent in a decade.

In an article on "The Age of the World," Sir Edward Fry, the famous English geologist, declares that 450,000,000 years must have elapsed since the existence of life on the globe.

In Australia every leaf on a grape vine is an advantage to it, because without the protection it affords the sun's heat—which often exceeds 100 degrees in the shade—would scorch the berries.

The extraction of nitrogen from the inexhaustible supply in the air, by a method so inexpensive as to make it feasible for the production of fertilizer has been accomplished by bringing the nitrogen into combination with a mixture of powdered charcoal and lime in an electrical furnace.

While strong plants destroy weaker ones by crowding, or by depriving them of air, light or food, it is rather surprising to hear that one plant may poison another. A plant called Humera elegans, which exhales a powerful odor of Russia leather, was placed in a greenhouse near a peach vine, when the nearest leaves of the latter began to wither and fall off. The influence was felt even at considerable distance, the result being that at last the young leaves were all stripped from the peach.

The Appetite of a Bird. When an old-fashioned hostess urges her guests to eat, after the conventional manner of showing hospitality, and remarks, "Why, you haven't the appetite of a bird!" she really speaks the truth, though she does not intend to. The average man, if he had a bird's appetite, would devour from thirty to thirty-one pounds of food, a day, which would be a tax on the farmer of his hostess.

Recent experiments have proved that the average bird manages to eat about one-fifth of his own weight daily with ease, if he can get so much food, and in a wild state, though the bird has to hunt for his daily provender, he is eating a large part of the time during the day, and manages to get his full rations.

The smaller the bird the more voracious seems to be its appetite and its power of absorption. A German scientist recently kept a canary under observation for a month. The little creature weighed only sixteen grammes, but in the course of the month it managed to eat 512 grammes weight of food—that is, about 32 times its own weight. The bird must, therefore, have eaten its own weight in food every day.

An ordinary man with a canary's appetite would consume 150 pounds of food a day. But the canary is an extreme case. The ordinary bird, in good health, will be satisfied with one-fifth of its weight a day by way of food.—Answers.

The Rattlesnake Business. Rattlesnake hunting is a profitable business over in Connecticut, and it is not overdone either. In the town of Portland there is a hunter of rattlers, John C. Reeves, who has had a national reputation for some years past, and has now added fresh laurels to it.

Early in the present month "Del," as he is generally called in the country around there, went hunting in the Somerset mountains, just east of Portland, where within a couple of days or so he managed to kill 36 rattlers ranging in length from 15 inches to nearly five feet. Seventeen of various lengths were killed within a space of about 15 square feet.

Some of the large snakes had nine or ten rattles, while some of the smaller had but one or two. The snakes were beautifully striped. Ten baby rattlers were found huddled together near their nest, which was in a rock crevice. Reeves captures his snakes by stealing upon them while they are basking in the sun and pinning them to the ground with a forked stick four or five feet in length. He then uses a club. He finds much sport in rattlesnake hunting, and also finds it very profitable. One dollar an ounce is realized from the oil. The skin nets him from 25 cents to \$2, and occasionally more for an unusually large one.—New York Commercial.

Malleable Glass. Glass for fireproof theatre curtains to take the place of asbestos is a proposition coming as the result of a discovery by Bavarian glassmakers. A product of one Bavarian factory, it is announced, is malleable as any metal, as well as capable of being drawn out in sheets or threads, and is absolutely non-breakable. Cooking utensils made of the new material stand the heat of fire without cracking or melting.

An extraordinary test to which the new glass has been submitted is that of patching, a feat which cannot be accomplished with any glass made in America. A plate of the Bavarian glass has been bored, it is said, and the hole plugged with the molten composition. The result is a smooth, impervious patch, different in every respect from the result obtained by cementing in a piece, as would be done with the old style of glass.

While man has approached the North within 238 miles, no one has yet stood within less than 772 miles of the South.

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Mrs. Haskell, Worthy Vice Templar, Independent Order Good Templars, of Silver Lake, Mass., tells of her cure by the use of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: Four years ago I was nearly dead with inflammation and ulceration. I endured daily untold agony, and life was a burden to me. I had used medicines and washes internally and externally until I made up my mind that there was no relief for me. Calling at the home of a friend, I noticed a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. My friend endorsed it highly and I decided to give it a trial to see if it would help me. It took patience and perseverance for I was in bad condition, and I used Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for nearly five months before I was cured, but what a change from despair to happiness from misery to the delightful exhilarating feeling health always brings. I would not change back for a thousand dollars, and your Vegetable Compound is a grand medicine.

"I wish every sick woman would try it and be convinced."—Mrs. IDA HASKELL, Silver Lake, Mass., Worthy Vice Templar, Independent Order of Good Templars.

When a medicine has been successful in more than a million cases, is it justice to yourself to say, without trying it, "I do not believe it would help me?"

Surely you cannot wish to remain weak, and sick and discouraged, exhausted, with each day's work. You have some derangement of the feminine organism, and Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you just as surely as it has others.

Mrs. Tillie Hart, of Larimore, N. D., says:

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: I might have spared many months of suffering and pain if I had known of the efficacy of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a few months sooner, for I tried many remedies without finding anything which helped me before I tried the Vegetable Compound. I dreaded the approach of the menstrual period every month, as it meant so much suffering and pain. Some months the flow was very scanty and others it was profuse, but after I began to use the Compound for two months I became regular and natural, and so I continued until I felt perfectly well, and the parts were strengthened to perform the work without assistance and pain. I am like a different woman now, where before I did not care to live, and I am pleased to testify for your Vegetable Compound has done for me." Sincerely yours, Mrs. TILLIE HART, Larimore, N.D.

Be it, therefore, believed, by all women who are ill that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the medicine they should take. It has stood the test of time, and it has hundreds of thousands of cures to its credit. Women should consider it unwise to use any other medicine. Mrs. Pinkham, whose address is Lynn, Mass., will answer cheerfully and without cost all letters addressed to her by sick women. Perhaps she has just the knowledge that will help your case—try her to-day—it costs nothing.

# FASCINATING QUESTION.

Idaho's Mineral Exhibit. Idaho will make an exhibit of minerals at the world's fair that will call attention to that state's wonderful resources. Her unrivaled exhibit of 200,000 opals is now overshadowed by the report that big discoveries of radium have recently been made. Executive Commissioner Hurt is arranging for a display of this newest wonder.

Another Gray's Sweet Powders for Children. Successfully used by Mother Gray, nurse in the Children's Home in New York, Cure Feverishness, Bad Stomach, Teething Disorders, move and regulate the bowels and destroy worms. Over 30,000 testimonials. At all druggists, 25c. Sample mailed Free. Address Allen S. Olmsted, Lo Roy, N. Y.

It doesn't take very much of a philosopher to draw moral deductions from the misfortunes of others.

10,000 Plants For 16c. This is a remarkable offer the John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis., makes. They will send you their big plant and seed catalog, together with enough seed to grow 1,000 fine solid Cabbages, 2,000 delicious Carrots, 2,000 Blanching, nifty Celery, 2,000 rich, buttery Lettuce, 1,000 splendid Onions, 1,000 rare, luscious Radishes, 1,000 gloriously brilliant Flowers.

This great offer is made in order to induce you to try their warranted seeds—for when you use one plant them you will grow the others.

ALL FOR BUT 16c. POSTAGE. providing you will return this notice, and if you will send them 20c. in postage, they will send you the above a package of the famous Berlin Cauliflower, [A.C.L.]

The most costly chair in existence belongs to the Pope. It is of silver—worth \$90,000.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c. a bottle.

Strong is the man who knows his weakness.

Trade Secrets. The two oldest secret trade processes now in existence are considered to be the manufacture of Chinese red, or Vermilion, and that method of inlaying the hardest steel with gold and silver which seems to have been practiced at Damascus ages ago, and is known only to the Syrian smiths and their pupils even to this day.

Lord Lamington, the new governor of Bombay, has been made knight grand commander of the Order of the Indian Empire.