

Saturday Night Talks
By Rev. F. E. DAVISON
Rutland, Vt.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

International Bible Lesson for
April 25, '09—(Acts 11: 19-30; 12: 25)

Jerusalem in Palestine and Antioch in Asia Minor are the double stars of the New Testament Church. The first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts cluster around the Holy City with Peter as the prominent character, then another star appears at Antioch, shining with equal brilliancy, with Paul as the chief personage. From these two luminous bodies the light of the gospel streams out through all the world. Here at Antioch we come to the place where, either in derision or in logical necessity, the church received its baptismal name, "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Just as the name Methodist was applied to the followers of Wesley because of his methodical, systematic way of doing things, and is now accepted and gloried in by a great church, so the Lutheran church points back to Martin Luther, and the Christian church is often nicknamed, Campbellites, because it was founded by Alexander Campbell. Thus the name Christian, which once meant merely Christ-men, was soon hailed as a mark of honor by his followers.

Multitudinous Sects.
Since that time sects and denominations have multiplied rapidly. There are in this country alone nearly two hundred different ecclesiastical bodies, not to mention the great host of independent organization and individual churches. There are six kinds of Adventists—first day, seventh day, and every day; thirteen kinds of Baptist, regular, irregular, and defective, Calvinist, free will, and general, hard-shell, soft-shell and scrambled; six kinds of Christians; twelve kinds of Lutherans; twelve kinds of Mennonites; seventeen kinds of Methodists, free, primitive and episcopal, itinerant and stationary; thirteen kinds of German Methodists, speaking the same language but differing as to the interpretation of doctrinal points; twelve kinds of Presbyterians, old school, new school, and no school, sky-blue and variegated in theology; seven kinds of Catholics.

Individual Views.
Not only so, but when it comes to a question of theological belief there are nearly as many creeds as there are individuals in the various churches. It is doubtful if any two persons could be found, anywhere, who would absolutely agree on points of doctrine. John Calvin is famous for his "five points," predestination, irresistible grace, original sin, particular redemption and perseverance of the saints, but Jacobus Arminius puts over against that five-pointed star, another of equal shape and brilliancy, conditional predestination, necessity of personal faith, the new birth through the Spirit, the ability of man to resist the grace of God, and the possibility of falling from grace.

These ideas in their thousand-fold ramifications are to be found in more or less degree in all thinking men, and they explain in part the reason for so many denominations. And yet it is but a small part of the reason. Very few people take the trouble to sit down and examine creeds and confessions of faith before selecting a church with which to unite. The vast majority simply say: What's in a name? and unite with the one that is most convenient. People are born Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists. Their ancestors for generations have all been connected with these denominations. By birth, and education, and training and temperament they are there. They know what their own church believes, but they know not and care not what anybody else believes. Others are in the church because they were converted in such a revival under the preaching of such a man. Some are there because they married a certain woman instead of a certain other woman. There are those who join one church rather than another because the best people go to that church, it is popular, and they are looking for trade; and some there are who get a lift at the preacher and go off and join another church in order to spite him.

The Family Name.
What's in a name? Nothing—and everything. So far as sects and denominations go there is no particular virtue in a title; so far as the great family name christian goes, everything is in a name. If a man is not a Christian his denominationalism will not save him. He may unite with them all in succession but they will not move him an inch towards the pearly gate. He may subscribe to Calvin's five points or those of Arminius but his subscription will not be worth the paper it is written upon. The reason why the disciples were called Christians at Antioch is because they were christians. That is to say, they were followers of Christ, they were acting out the Christ spirit, they were teaching men that they should live as Christ lived. They were Christians first, last and all the time.

Now, if any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Sects and denominations will perish, creeds and confessions will pass away, forms and ceremonies will vanish, controversies and disagreements will cease, but they who bear the image of the Christ will endure forever, for they shall awake in His likeness, and His name shall be in their foreheads.

WOMEN ARE GROWING TALLER.

Will Ultimately Come to Look Down on Mere Mister Man.

Thirteen hundred and seventy-nine young women with their thirteen hundred and seventy-nine mothers have recently been the objects of the curiosity of a group of English physicians, who are endeavoring to show, from a comparison of the relative heights of women past and present, that the divinity of the future will not only exceed her sisters of the past in stature and de-



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

velopment, but will ultimately come to look down on Mere Mister Man in more senses than one. For the darling is growing; growing so fast that in 100 years the average woman will be taller than the average man by half a head, if not very much more.

All this has been carefully worked out, and guesswork has not been allowed to play any part in the investigations. As everybody knows, the devotion that women have displayed to outdoor sports within the past gen-



TO-DAY.

eration—dating roughly from 1876—has been responsible for the statistical fact that the girls of the day—said girls being, let us say, in the late 'teens—exceed their mothers by nearly three inches in height. In 1875 the girl of eighteen or nineteen stood only 5 feet 3 inches in her—well, without her shoes. Today the succeeding charmer of the same age is at least 5 feet 5 inches. In the meantime how has man fared?



A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.
According to the British statisticians, who deal with Europeans, man has fallen by at least three-fourths of an inch within the past 100 years; nor are there any signs that there is an upward tendency among the males. On the contrary the average man of the future will appear squat, if not stunted, besides his Junonian sister.

Which is the Bride?

Good anecdotes of Saphir, the great German humorist and editor, are still in circulation. A young couple, newly engaged, were favored with a letter of introduction to him, which they duly presented. Now, the gentleman was notorious for his effeminate habits and ways, and his appearance at once struck the eye of the observant journalist, who had heard about him. He said nothing, received the pair with embarrassment, insisted upon their being seated in his most comfortable easy-chairs, assured them how pleased he was to hear of their engagement, and wound up with: "Now, pray, you must, you really must, tell me which of you is to be the bride."

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