

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

VACATING A PULPIT

International Bible Lesson for
May 9, '09—(Acts 13: 13-52).

John Wesley had an infallible rule by which he decided the fitness of candidates for the ministry. He sent them out upon a tour of the churches, and when they returned he had three questions to ask as follows: Was anybody converted? Was anybody sanctified? Was anybody mad? If the candidate could give an affirmative reply to any one of these questions, he was considered eligible, but if he had to confess that he could neither get people converted, sanctified nor mad it was pretty conclusive evidence that he was not called to preach. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; its proclamation makes men better or worse, and that man may well be doubtful of his right to occupy a pulpit whose words leave no influence upon men one way or the other.

Opposition Aroused.
There are some modern preachers who get into a panic when they discover that their message has aroused opposition; whereas that is one of the clearest evidences that they are following instructions and demonstrating their fitness to stand as ambassadors for Christ. The great preachers from Elijah down have created a disturbance. The true messenger will always cause a rattling among the dry bones. No man of God should ever apologize for disturbing the peace of somnolent saints or rebuking sin in high places. Of course it will be understood that I make no plea for boorishness, personalities, antagonism of individuals or using the pulpit of God's house to indulge in abusive language. But when the proclamation of the gospel arouses opposition it should be regarded by every man as an evidence of piety and power.

The apostle Paul came to just such an experience at Antioch in Pisidia on his first missionary tour. The first sermon he preached pleased the people so much that they begged him to stay through the week and occupy the pulpit the next Sabbath. All that week the Jews were talking up the great preacher and urging the brethren to come out and hear him. But the Gentiles also became interested and they packed the synagogue when the day of service came. But what was the surprise and indignation of the Jews when they heard the same sermon preached, with a Gentile application. Like dogs in the manger they growled and contradicted and blasphemed, and broke up the meeting with their tumult. It was the same sermon that they had previously lauded. It was all right so long as it suited their prejudices, but when they saw that it was actually a gospel for all men they spit upon it with insults.

Opposition Working.
Not satisfied with this they determined to get rid of the preacher, and they took the most effective method to carry out their purpose. The Scripture says, "The Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women . . . and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them out of their coasts." It would be interesting to know what part those "devout and honorable women" took in bringing about that result. Did they begin to criticize his personal appearance, the cut of his clothes, the method of parting his hair? Did they send a committee to suggest that it would be wise not to displease Brother So and So, and Sister Such and Such, on account of their financial contributions? Nobody knows. The record is silent; all we know is, Paul saw the cloud rising on the horizon no bigger than a man's, or woman's hand, and he concluded that discretion is the better part of valor and moved on to "fresh fields and pastures new."

Opposition Successful.
And herein he showed his wisdom. There is no faithful preacher but can find work somewhere. The very message that makes some people howling mad will make other people shouting happy. Why should a man stay in a den of lions when he can spend his days where birds sing all day and all night? Why should a man waste his strength and ingenuity forcing the bread of life down unwilling throats, when he can just as well go to those who are so hungry that they will take it from him as fast as he can pass it out? It ought to be understood that it is no disgrace for a preacher to be chased out of a pulpit by "devout and honorable women" when the only charge against him is the bigotry and self-righteousness of his hearers. The greatest preacher of the ages, Paul the apostle, was vexed and tormented by those who did not like his preaching. An intelligent preacher ought to know before anybody else knows, when his work is done. God not only tells men to "Come," but to "Go." In the war of the rebellion we had six months' men, and the same thing is true in the spiritual conflict. The fact that a preacher's predecessor spent all his days in one parish is no criterion; he might not have remained three weeks anywhere else. There are misfits in the pulpit as there are everywhere else; sometimes the preacher is too big for a pulpit and sometimes too small. But in either case the "devout and honorable women" find it out. If these women had been of no consequence in the community, possibly Paul would have paid no attention to them.

THE LITTLE WOODEN BARREL.

Turned Out in This Country in Millions and Sold All Over the World.

Among the all but endless variety of things of wood produced in American factories are little wooden barrels. They are turned out of white birch, and come in many sizes, from tiny affairs an inch and a half high up to barrels ten inches high.

The biggest of them are turned with a hand manipulated tool, but those ranging from six inches downward, are turned each with a cutting tool, having an edge so formed that it turns the barrel all at once. They set a block of wood in the lathe and adjust the cutting tool and it turns the barrel into shape complete as quickly as a man turning with a hand tool could have turned one of the hoops on it; and on the smallest barrels one man can run three or four machines.

The barrels are sold in the aggregate in great numbers, millions of them yearly. A single tack manufacturing concern buys them in carload lots, 2,000 gross or 288,000 barrels at a time. Great numbers are used by confectioners, who fill them with candy, and they are used to contain a bottle of perfumery.

Many are sold to be given away at fairs or in other ways, being filled with a sample of a staple product of the region, perhaps of flour, or it might be of sugar. Many of them are made with a slot cut in one end or head, through which coins can be dropped, the little barrels in this form being used for savings banks, or given out by Sunday school teachers to their pupils to make collections in for some specific purpose. Individual purchasers buy the little barrels to use for button boxes, and great numbers of them are sold for toys.

So in this country there are used millions of them annually, and for all the various uses to which the little barrels are put they are exported in large numbers to countries all over the world.

Don't Fold Your Arms.

By folding your arms you will pull the shoulders forward, flatten the chest and impair deep breathing. Folding the arms across the chest so flattens it down that it requires a conscious effort to keep the chest in what should be its natural position. As soon as you forget yourself down drops the chest.

We cannot see ourselves as others see us. If we could, many of us would be ashamed of our chests. The position you hold your body in most of the time soon becomes its natural position. Continuously folding your arms across the chest will develop a flat chest and a rounded back.

Here are four other hints which should be made habits: Keep the back of the neck close to the back of the collar at all possible times. Always carry the chest farther to the front than any other part of the anterior body. Draw the abdomen in and up a hundred times each day. Take a dozen deep slow breaths a dozen times each day.—The Family Doctor.

Happiest Man on Earth.

Across the front of the cottage of Johann Schmid, who lives in the village of Suhr, in the canton of Argovie, is the sentence, painted in large letters: "Here lives the happiest man on earth."

Schmid who is 55 years of age, said to an interviewer: "I defy you to find a happier man than myself. I have never worked, never married, never been ill, and have never been anxious for the future. I eat well, drink well, and sleep well. What more would you have?"

When in his teens Schmid was left by his father an income of about £1 a week and a small piece of land. He built his cottage on the land and has occupied it ever since.—London Standard.

Anaesthetics Known in Middle Ages.

Lecturing before the Association of Surgeons at Munich on narcotics Prof. Klem said that the process of reducing the sensibilities of patients with a view to making operations painless was known and practiced in the Middle Ages. Bishop Theodorus of Chervira wrote a prescription for a pain destroyer in the twelfth century which contained opium, morphine and hyoscum. A medical work printed in 1460 contains the first known treatise on inhalation and we now inject under the skin the soothing mixture which in 1460 was inhaled.—London Globe.

Chestnut Tree the Belfry.

Epiphany Mission, a little Protestant Episcopal church at Sherwood, Ohio, recently received the gift of a large bell. As it is without a tower or belfry, the members pondered long over the disposition of the bell. The problem was solved by hanging the bell to an old chestnut tree which stands so near the church that one large limb extends over the roof. The bell is rung as easily from the vestry room as if it were in the building.

Thrifty French Peasantry.

The French peasant wastes nothing. Leaves of trees are collected for bedding for the cattle and in years of leanness, are used as fodder. He gathers the mushrooms of the fields and the edible fungi of the woods and finds a ready market for such waste products as the nuts of the wayside hazels or the black berries of the heaths. He snares small birds, whether famous for song or plumage.—Country Life.

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