

**Saturday Night**  
**Talks**

By Rev. F. E. DAVISON  
Rutland, Va.

**A BLOW AT BIGOTRY**

International Bible Lesson for  
May 23, '09—(Acts 15: 1-35).

The book of Acts opens in the Jewish city of Jerusalem and ends in Imperial Rome. And the contents of the book are chiefly occupied with the story of the rise and progress of Christianity from the heart of Judaism to a place in the capital of the world. At first it seems to be only one form of Judaism. Its founder was a Jew, his disciples were Jews, and the new doctrines were preached at first exclusively to Jews. But when we reach the end of the book we find that the new faith has burst its early limitations. Gentiles everywhere have been gathered into the fold, and instead of looking upon a phase of Jewish religion, we behold a faith adapted to all mankind.

**Shipwreck Avoided.**

But in order to bring about that result the church had to pass through an experience like a ship in the breakers on a lee shore, only escaping an awful shipwreck through the able seamanship of those who were in control of affairs. The trouble came because of the narrow bigotry of the Jewish converts. When the Gentiles began to apply for admission to church membership they insisted that they must conform to the Mosaic law and observe the customs of the Jewish church or they could not be saved.

One of the hardest lessons for men to learn is to unlearn and act contrary to early impressions and convictions. They become so much a part of our mental and spiritual structure that it seems like tearing down a part of ourselves to break away from these ideas. Therefore those Jewish converts, though acknowledging that the Mosaic yoke was one which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear, yet inconsistently insisted on putting it upon the necks of the Gentile disciples. When they saw other people rejoicing in the liberty where with Christ had set them free, they picked up that ancient yoke, and said, "You must bear this as we do." Against such a pernicious doctrine Paul protested with all his might, and he was supported by some of the leaders who had had their eyes opened to the truth. In consequence the first church council was held at Jerusalem and it was unanimously decided that the work of the old dispensation had been finished; that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and thus with their own hands these converted Jews steered the ship of christianity out of the breakers never to be in danger of shipwreck at that point.

**Caterpillar vs. Butterfly.**

That was the death blow of bigotry, and yet the old veteran was not slain, through all the ages he has been able to get in more or less of his work. The remains of that narrow, self-righteous, exclusiveness bothered the church for generations. Paul wrote a whole epistle, Galatians, to show that there was no salvation by the works of the law, and that Christian believers were under no obligations to it in any particular. As well might a new born butterfly carry around with it its old caterpillar existence, and attempt to fly and crawl at the same time. The Jewish Christians from force of habit and because of affectionate veneration for the past, for a long time dragged along their Jewish customs. But as time wore on they dropped them one by one, and came to Paul's standard which he describes "as not having the righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." The butterfly does not denounce and condemn the caterpillar. The Gentile Christians did not denounce Judaism, they simply had no use for it. They were living in a new dispensation, they were worshipping a living redeemer, they had got beyond the alphabet, they saw no particular need of venerating the scaffolding when they had the building itself, they did not make the mistake of putting new wine into old bottles, or sewing on new patches to an old garment. They had new wine, and new garments, and new promises, and new priesthood, their Master had declared, Behold I make all things new.

**Tyrant's Bedstead.**

It is said of an ancient tyrant that he had an iron bedstead which he fitted to every one of his victims by the simple expedient of sawing off the long and stretching out the short to bring them into the proper length. There is the spirit of bigotry symbolized. Get some peculiar idea in your head and then insist on stretching out or sawing off everybody to fit that notion. It matters not what it is. It may be a mode of baptism, it may be the observance of a day, it may be a statement of theology, it may be a claim of infallibility, it may be a form of ordination. All it needs is fanaticism enough to insist that a certain thing is essential to salvation and you have got a bigot, full-fledged and controversial on your hands. The old colored Baptist preacher could find baptism by immersion taught in every text of Scripture, and when some one, on a wager, gave him the text, "The voice of the turtle is heard in the land" his interpretation was instantly available. The voice of the turtle is the noise the animal makes in plunging off the log into deep water, and it teaches baptism by immersion as plain as language can express ideas.

**A WEED EATING CREEPER.**

It Protects the Rubber Plant from the Lalang.

It appears that at last an antidote has been found to the noxious weeds which are so frequently the death of certain forms of plant and vegetable life in the East. Specimens of this wonderful "find" have been forwarded to the authorities at Kew Gardens. This plant is a blue flowering creeper botanically known as the Commelina nudiflora linnaea, but called "rumpit gremah" by the natives of Malaya and "ge-war-an" by the Javanese. Although the report made at Kew goes to show that this creeper is common throughout the middle East, it would seem that the managers of estates and plantations have not known of its peculiarly welcome properties until very recently and accidentally.

The prolific weed known as "lalang" is the great enemy to rubber growth. It was the accident of observing that where the blue flowered creeper came in contact with the lalang the latter became much less injurious that induced a planter to send specimens to Kew. It seems that at first one begins to notice that the weeds are becoming less prolific where the creeper is growing among them. This improvement steadily increases as time goes on and it has been found that under the influence of this antidote lalang which was formerly four or five feet in height has been reduced to only one or two feet when it starts to flower.

But the joyful discovery having been made that here was an undoubted setback to the weedy growth that chokes young rubber and is the bane of the planter's life, the question arose: Would the antidote itself exercise a prejudicial effect on the rubber? Therefore the specimens were duly submitted to Kew, and, as stated to our representative, the new creeper is unlikely to have any harmful effect on young rubber trees." Planters all over the East may therefore take heart of grace and also take this new "medicine."

In appearance the blue flowered Commelina nudiflora is rather pretty, and like the weeds which it first checks and then kills it grows with astonishing rapidity. The particular estate whose manager made the discovery and acted upon it so promptly and satisfactorily is the Langkon estate, in British North Borneo. The amount of rubber produced annually in the Straits Settlements is of course very large, and the results of the discovery and its successful application are likely to be far reaching.

**A True Pigeon Story.**

A gentleman had two pairs of pigeons living in dovecots placed side by side. In each pigeon family there was a father and a mother bird and two little ones. On a certain day the parents in one dovecot went away to get food, and while they were gone one of their little birds fell out of the dovecot and down to the ground. The poor baby bird was not much hurt, strange to say, but it could not get back, for it was too young to fly.

Now, the parents in the other dovecot were at home when this happened, and it seemed as if they said to themselves: "One of our babies might fall out in just that way. We must do something to make the dovecot safer." And then this wise, careful father and mother went to work. They flew about until they found some small sticks. These they carried to their own dovecot, and there in the doorway they built a cunning little fence of sticks, not so high but that the little pigeons could look over it, but high enough to keep them from ever falling out of the dovecot as their little neighbor had done. The owner of the pigeons, who had seen the birdling fall and had put it back into its dovecot, watched the birds the whole time as they gathered the sticks and built the fence across the doorway. This is a true story, and it is often told to some children in Boston by a lady who knows the owner of these very pigeons.

**A Man Who Never Speaks.**

Because he was reprimanded for talking too much when he was a boy, John S. Smith, of Kansas City, has not spoken for twenty-seven years. He is not a recluse, and he does not refrain from conversation with those around him, but he "talks" with a pencil and pad only.

Smith is a contractor and builder, and frequently has orders to give to his employees. These he always gives in writing. When questions are asked he replies in writing, and he and his workmen get on amazingly well together, better, he asserts, than if he spoke to them.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

**What They All Say.**

How we label the man whose opinions don't coincide with ours—when our opinions are based on money: Yes, he's an able fellow, but of course everyone knows that he's a little bit off on

Here mention:  
Politics,  
Religion,  
Medicine,  
Literature,  
Etc.

Whatever the particular thing may happen to be.

**Early Conditions Important.**

Artists say that the surroundings of the child determine whether or not he may become an artist. Hideous surroundings warp and twist the perception of the beautiful so that in later life the child cannot compete with those who have enjoyed a more artistic environment.

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