

**SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS**

By REV. F. E. DAVISON  
Rutland, Vt.

**SONGS IN THE NIGHT.**

International Bible Lesson for  
July 11, '09—(Acts 16: 16-40).



The Bible is not only a volume of theology, a record of national history, biography and poetry, it is also a music box, playing solos, duets, choruses, oratorios and hallelujahs. As we turn its pages we hear the song of the new birth, the song of

thanksgiving, the song of victory, the song before the throne. And in this lesson we have the song in the night.

What a picture is here presented! Two men, with backs bleeding where they have been flogged till every vein drips blood, are in an underground dungeon, chains on their wrists, their feet fast in torturing stocks, the prospect of a violent death at daybreak resting upon them. Is there any inspiration here for singing? Uncover those bleeding backs and see if that mangled flesh gives any occasion for praise. Lift up those chains, examine the cruel stocks, put your hand gently on those fevered brows and see if you can discover anything that would lead human beings to sing. And yet, we are told that at midnight these two men had a real Pentecostal prayer and praise meeting and made that old Philippian jail vocal with melody. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God."

And this praise meeting was not the boisterous bacchanalian revelry of intoxication, nor the senseless strains of the demented. It was intelligent, sober, earnest, heartfelt, enthusiastic. It was the duet of men who were confident that God was on the throne of the Universe, and that He was working out His good pleasure for the eternal improvement of the race. The world says, if you are rich you can sing. The world says, if you are successful you can sing. The world says, if you have good health you can sing. The world says, if you have plenty of friends, you can sing. But if you are poor, and unsuccessful, and sick, and have no friends, take the advice of Job's wife in a similar case. Curse God and die. But at midnight, in a dungeon, with lacerated bodies and limbs in shackles, prone on the ground where they had been flung, no eye to pity and no arm to save, Paul and Silas sang a song in the night the echoes of which are in the air to-day.

The fact is, this is the only kind of singing that is immortal. Anybody can sing in day time; only the immortals sing in the night.

Joseph sang that kind of music in Potiphar's prison. The three Hebrew worthies sang it in the fiery furnace. The lions den echoed it in the days of Daniel. The cells of the Inquisition have resounded with such songs; songs have mingled with the breaking of bones on the rack, and have risen above the roar of the flames into the ear of the God of heaven. And it is so to-day. The circumstances have changed, but the midnight that men are still called to pass through is just as black as ever. All over this earth the scene of the Philippian jail is being re-enacted. Listen to the songs that are still going up from human lips—songs where wealth has been swept away, songs where health has gone and the river of death is in sight, songs in the chamber where loved ones are sleeping their last sleep, songs amid the upturned sod of the cemetery, songs at midnight, because the morning star shines already on the horizon.

And this song of Paul and Silas had a mighty result. "The prisoners heard them." The jailer and his family were transformed because of it. The song did not exhaust itself on the lives of the singers; it refreshed them; it saved others. Once on a Southern battlefield a Northern soldier lay dying. Crushed by the shot of the enemy his life blood was slowly ebbing away. All about him, in the darkness, other mangled forms were lying helpless and alone. But this man was not alone, for there was a great peace in his heart, as the moments brought him ever nearer to the home of his soul. Thus in the midnight he broke out into song:

"When I can read my title clear,  
To mansions in the skies,  
I'll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes."

And as he was singing, one and another in the darkness took up the strain. Here and there trembling voices joined in, and pretty soon, all over the battlefield a multitude of voices were lifting the song of triumph:

"I'll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes."

Thus they sang until one by one their lips were closed in death. That was a song in the night worth singing. That was a battle shout of men who were "conquerors and more than conquerors through Him," of whom the Fatherland angels sang in the midnight centuries ago.

**DEBIT AND CREDIT.**

**A Bit of Wit and a Bit of Wisdom**  
Apropos of Unpaid Bills.

One of the most amiable men who ever dunned a delinquent debtor has condensed the argument of his calling into an epigram and pasted it on the back of his collection book. It reads:

MAN CAME FROM DUST—  
DUST SETTLES.  
ARE YOU A MAN?

In one of the offices of the Department of Education, New York City, hangs a card which gives the other side of the philosophy of owing money. "There is something ennobling," it says, "about the patience of our creditors."

**Women Like Pockets.**

"Talk about the small boy and his desire for plenty of pockets," remarked Harry New, manager of one of the biggest concerns in the city or in the west, manufacturing women's garments, "no youngster with his first pair of trousers is half as excited about his pockets as is the average woman buying a cloak or suit. Within the last few years the question of pockets has come to be an important matter in women's garments. Women not only like pockets for carrying various small articles, but they can even like them so placed in their coats that they can walk with their hands in them, the same as a man. It's getting so that we manufacturers hardly dare put out a garment without paying attention first of all to the pocket feature."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**It is All a Matter of Taste.**

A strange fact is told by travellers who declare that the Arabs in the deserts of Africa have contracted a violent dislike to running water, and will only drink from stagnant pools when on journeys. This has become so much a matter of habit, that while the most poisonous-looking water agrees with them perfectly, pure running water will in a few hours make them violently sick. This prejudice against fresh water is common amongst the animals of the desert also, and is frequently acquired by European travellers. At first, however, when the latter drink of stagnant water it produces nausea and even fever, but when once the system becomes inured to it, running water affects them in precisely the same way as it affects the Arabs.

**Her Answer.**

An Atchison girl had a proposal of marriage Sunday night and asked a week to think it over. She went to all of her married sisters. One, who used to be a belle, had three children, did all her own work and hadn't been to the theatre or out riding since she was married. Another, whose husband was a promising young man at the time she was married, was supporting him. A third didn't dare say her life was her own when her husband was around, and a fourth was divorced. After visiting them and hearing their woes, the heroine of this little tale went home, got pen, ink and paper and wrote an answer to the young man. You may think it was refusing him, but it wasn't. She said she could be ready in a month.

**Houses Built of Meerschaum.**

The town of Vallecas, in Spain, is almost entirely built of meerschaum. Vallecas has on its outskirts great quarries of a meerschaum too coarse for pipe making, and a meerschaum-belt town is the result—an ivory-white town that shines in the Spanish sun. In Morocco meerschaum is so plentiful that they use it, when soft and fresh, for soap. It gives a plentiful and cleansing lather. Ekdischehr, in Asia Minor, supplies the world's meerschaum. There are 2,000 mines, large and small, and 8,000 Kurd and Persian meerschaum miners work day and night in them. The meerschaum comes from the earth yellow, and turns white after ten days bleaching in the sun.

**Setting Fire to a Whale.**

A dead whale, seventy-five feet long, came ashore at Phillips Cove, on the Maine coast, and large numbers of tourists went off in motor boats to have a good look at the monster. Then the town authorities towed the carcass two miles out, and inserting into it sticks of dynamite, set the explosive off. What was their astonishment when the whole animal burst into flames, fed by the whale oil for which whales were once so much hunted before the discovery of petroleum. The flames shot ten feet high, and the carcass was several hours in burning, the beach being lined with astonished spectators.

**Real Diamonds.**

Mrs. McBride — It was awfully thoughtful of Uncle George to give me what he did for a wedding present.

Girl Friend—Why, what did he give you?

"Haven't you heard? Why, you see, the other guests sent plated ware and paste jewelry mostly, but Uncle George gave me real diamonds—just think of it! a whole ton of Lehigh coal to begin housekeeping with!"

**Lincoln's Freedom from Can't.**

One of the delightful things about Lincoln was his freedom from can't. He never set out to "set an example." He lived his life simply and naturally, thought out and spoke the thought that was in him, did the work he found to do and let his example shift for itself. By consequence it is one of the great examples, one of the great inspirations, of human history.

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