

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS

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

A LESSON IN TACT.

International Bible Lesson for
July 25, '09—(Acts 17: 16-34).



In his missionary journeyings Paul came to the celebrated city of Athens, the seat and centre of art, eloquence and philosophy, the intellectual capital of the world. Wonderful City. It was his first and only visit to the ancient metropolis and it made a deep impression upon his mind. It was a city of temples and statues. Art and learning here had their home. Around him were the sculptured forms of Minerva and Jupiter, Apollo and Mercury, the Muses and other representatives of heathen mythology. It was said by an ancient satirist that it was easier to find a god at Athens than a man, for thirty thousand divinities were included in the Greek and Roman pantheon. They were heroic, fantastic or impure, but the city was full of them. There were streets so crowded with sellers of articles connected with idolatry as to be almost impassable.

Wonderful Opportunity.

It was in such a presence that the apostle now stood, and God gave him one single opportunity to declare his message. How did he do it?

A committee of distinguished Athenians waited upon the famous preacher, and invited him to address them on Mars Hill. It was the opportunity of a lifetime and a smaller man would have made a miserable failure. To preach in church behind a pulpit, to a devout and sympathetic people, who will accept whatever the preacher says simply because he says it, is one thing, to face such a company as the Athenian audience is quite another. Those people were critical, logical, hard-headed, accustomed to look into things, and accept nothing on the mere ipse dixit of a speaker. They prided themselves on their intellectuality and piety, and had no idea that a mere peripatetic Jew would be able to instruct them in either morality or religion. Yet they were desirous of hearing all the new things, and they politely invited Paul to deliver his message on that popular rostrum of discussion, Mars Hill.

Wonderful Tact.

The apostle's first word shows that he is not only a cultured Christian gentleman himself, but is master of the art of winsome speech. He disarms criticism with his first sentence.

Instead of railing at idolatry as the old version implies, he courteously declares that his observation has led him to the conclusion that the Athenians are "very religious." "I passed by, and beheld your devotions," he says, "and as I did so, I saw an altar with this inscription, 'To the Unknown God.' That is, you worship all those you know, and for fear that you should be guilty of impiety ignorantly, you put up another altar to the unknown God. Now I have a message to deliver to you in regard to that unknown God." And then the preacher proceeded to talk to them of the God that made the world, and all the people in it. And in the most logical, sensible, courteous, and Christian way struck a blow at idolatry that is absolutely unanswerable from that day to this. Wonderful exhibition of tact! If you are going to win anyone, you can never do it with an ecclesiastical blackjack. If you want to convince a Catholic, you had better steer clear of attacking the Virgin Mary. If you want to win a Jew, better keep your hands off from Moses. You will never gain a Baptist by splashing over him the waters of immersion. To go at a heathen by denouncing idolatry as of the devil, will only strengthen him in his views.

To tell a man he is a fool because he doesn't believe as you do, puts it out of your power ever to influence him to believe as you do. You can't split people's heads open with the battle axe of controversy and introduce orthodoxy through the gash. The trouble with most modern controversialists is, they have no patience with anybody who cannot see exactly as they can, no matter what their birth, surroundings, education and training has been. Paul caught the attention of his audience and held it to the close, first by the wonderful tact of his approach, and second by his quotations from their own poets, which he cited in support of his doctrine.

The tactful person always seeks to find some common ground on which to stand, instead of some bomb proof fort from which to bombard the world. Paul argued that the very fact of an altar to the unknown God proved the religious instinct in the soul, and he caught at that blind feeling after God and sought to direct it aright. Whatever the outcome of that sermon, certainly the people of Athens would have no hesitation in declaring that those who listened to Paul that day received a lesson in sacred eloquence that compared favorably with any oration that had ever been delivered from the summit of Mars Hill.

"SEATLESS GOWN" TO SAVE

Empire Style Makes Wearers Cripples and Coquettes, Says Grand Master of Tailors.

Boston, Mass.—The tight-fitting Empire gown must go. That was the fiat issued by Samuel Paul, of New York, grand master of the United Tailors' Association of America, in an address at the convention of men who try.

If Mr. Paul has his way, most of the Parisian fashions will go, along with the Empire gown which he ridiculed unsparingly. The "Seatless gown" he said, would prove the salvation of womankind.

He declared the Empire gown made cripples and coquettes of women. In his respect, he said, it was a fair type of all the other Paris fashions which has furnished American women the unspeakable sheath gown and the equally ridiculous pantaloon dress.

"A fashionable woman, wearing an Empire gown, is bound to acquire a hoochee-koochee walk," he declared. "Women who are trying to excel their friends in style in order to make the Empire more effective, walk with straight knees. Some women have practiced this walk until they become experts at it."

"If a woman wants to sit down in an Empire gown she either must unbutton the buttons from the knees down and display the petticoat or she must get the help of three men to place her in a sitting posture. She is unable, with the tight-fitting Empire that hugs the hips so closely, to do it herself."

After scoring the sheath and the pantaloon gowns, Mr. Paul declared that it required "audacity and impudence to supply such styles to American women."

Then he praised the hipless gown, the gown that is trained loose over the hips, and then described the "seatless gown," as he called it.

"I would suggest," said he, "that we create another gown to be called the Seatless gown. This style is to be made in suits as well as princesses, with straight lines from the shoulders down, loose fitting, but at the same time neat and becoming. It would also be in every respect comfortable to wear and walk in, and I am confident that a style of this kind will appeal to the American women."

DO YOU KNOW HIM?



Portrait of the Only Man in America Who Hasn't Invented a Flying-Machine. P. S.—He Will Invent One Next Week.

RULES FOR HER LIVING.

Suing Capitalist, Rich Wife Says She Had to Pay Board.

Atlanta, Ga.—Charging that he presented to her a remarkable set of rules to govern their lives, the penalty for violation of any one of them being one hundred kisses, Mrs. Emma Neal Douglas sued her husband, E. Lee Douglas, a lawyer and capitalist, for divorce. She is the daughter of the late President Neal, of the Neal Band, and is worth over \$200,000, while her husband's wealth is estimated to be \$500,000.

Mrs. Douglas charges that her husband made her pay extra for having meals sent to her room when sick; that he quarrelled with her when she ate what he considered too many potatoes; that he objected to giving servants anything but bread; that she had to have his permission to have guests, and had to pay their expenses; that she had to pay board; that he refused to buy theatre tickets, but went when she bought them; that he always searched out with "miserly care" such little items as shoe shines, and that when she was sick and needed a heavier coat he refused to give her her own money with which to buy one.

When they went to hotels she says her husband refused to tip waiters and porters, and she had to perform this service. She alleges that her health has been completely broken down by this treatment.

WHY FRENCHMEN GO MAD.

Romance a Very Small Factor—Money Losses and Drink Lead.

Paris.—The authorities of the Department of the Seine have published statistics of the 4,000 insane persons who came under their care last year.

The column giving causes deals a blow at romance, as "the loss of a beloved person" occurs only seventeen times. Love is responsible for only three cases of insanity and remorse for one case.

Money losses and drink were the chief agents.

Long Hair Hides Brand.

London.—Marshall Hall, K. C., at the arsenal dinner of the Playgoers' Club at the Hotel Cecil, referred to an early statute under which actors found wandering were liable to be branded through the right ear, and said that that was the reason so many members of the theatrical profession still wore their hair long. They wanted to conceal that particular decoration.

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