

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS

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Rutland, Vt.

DIGNITY OF LABOR.

International Bible Lesson for
Aug. 1, '09—(Acts 13: 1-22)



It is interesting to trace back the river of Christianity to its source, and observe the hand of an overruling Providence in the opening years of its inception. Beginning in Jerusalem, a religious city, it went successively to Athens the philosophical city, to Corinth the pleasure-loving city, and to Rome, the military city, each of them centres of influence from whence radiated beams of light to every quarter of the earth.

Strange Providences.

Away off in the city of Rome there dwelt a Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla. The Emperor, Claudius, in a fit of rage against the Jews, banished them from Rome, and heavy-hearted and disconsolate these two people emigrated far away to Corinth, and settled down to their trade of tent making. From the opposite direction, unknown to them, a disappointed itinerant preacher, Paul by name, was coming toward the same point. After his mission was ended in Athens the lonely preacher tramped the intervening forty-five miles which brought him to Corinth. He was also a tent maker by trade. He at once sought employment. Being himself a Jew he naturally inquired for his own countrymen.

And so it came to pass that the tent maker Paul, became a laborer and a boarder in the family of the tent makers, Aquila and Priscilla.

Hard luck and persecution, extradition and banishment are not handsome courtiers, but they often introduce us to people who are the Prime Ministers of the King.

Paul, the Tent Maker.

What grander testimony can be given to the dignity of labor than that of the tent maker, Paul. All day he toiled at his trade and preached the gospel by the good work he turned out, as well as by the words he uttered. We often see Paul pictured as a preacher in a crowd of listeners, but this lesson shows him as a toiler, and day laborer. Cordage lying heaped up around him, canvas drawn over the floor in folds, balls of twine scattered about here and there, the tent maker at work. I warrant you his seams never ripped, his cloth never proved to be shoddy. No one ever had to say sneeringly, "I bought these cheap tents of that Christian! See how he chanted me!"

The dignity of labor! Paul's hands were hardened by it. Peter's and Andrew's and John's were burned in the sun. Christ, the son of a carpenter, himself working at the bench. Paul evidently was not looking for a "good place," an easy berth, a fat salary. Else he would never have accepted "a call" to Corinth. He got near the people by working with them. They did not pull him down; he lifted them up. He spent no time grumbling and complaining because he had to toil, he did not feel that it was his right to have people feed him with chickens, put elegant dressing gowns on his back, and soft slippers on his feet, and pamper his body and develop his pride. He worked for what he got and was independent of all.

That was one reason why he was such a fearless preacher. He was not afraid of losing his salary if he told people the truth, and if he couldn't live in one place he could in another, and if he couldn't preach, he certainly could practice, and he was equally good in both. His tents were as good as his sermons, and he didn't have to eat any man's bread, or be any man's puppet. Independent, dignified, self-reliant, he is a magnificent example to scores of men who are marching about from one church door to another, begging for the privilege of eating their bread and drinking their water.

Not that manual labor is the only kind of labor. The fact that a preacher has white hands and wears good clothes does not necessarily mean that he is not a laborer. Mental labor is often more strenuous than digging ditches. Perspiration of the body is often a relief, where brain sweat is slow suicide. Many a man in the pulpit works harder than some men in the foundry. The one pounds iron and is able to shape it; the other seeks to mould human hearts and finds them harder than flint and as unchangeable as fate. He carries all sorrows, bears all burdens, receives all confidences, visits all perilous places, risks all diseases, responds to all calls, takes all rebuffs, and is responsible for a whole parish of human beings. Work! It is the common lot of man; with pen or spade, with needle or yardstick, with hammer or plough, with type or sewing-machine, hard labor for life is passed upon all men. Let us all put heart and interest and love into it, and so be happy with the dignity of it. For as the old poet put it, "Who sweeps a room as in God's sight, makes that, and the action fine."

HIS BONES FOR BUTTONS.

Other Parts of a Man's Body to Become Violin Strings.

His bones to make buttons, his skin to be tanned and given to his friends and other parts of his body to be made into violin strings—such are the provisions of the will of Henry E. Sullivan of 233 West 100th street, New York.

The will, which Mr. Sullivan alleges is made, has these clauses:

I do hereby direct the executors of this my will to have made out of my bones circular outtons of the dimensions of from one-half inch to one inch in diameter.

I do further direct my said executors to have the skin of my body tanned and made into pouches.

I do hereby further direct my said executors to have made out of such parts of my body as may be suitable strings for the violin, such as are usually designated "cat-gut" strings.

And I do hereby further direct my said executors to have said violin strings adjusted to the body of a violin.

I hereby give, devise and bequeath unto my beloved friend and club-mate, James Hayes, all and singular, the buttons, violin strings and tanned skin made out of my body, as aforesaid, the same to be by him distributed according to his discretion to my intimate friends.

When asked why he made such a queer testament Mr. Sullivan said:

"Every task we undertake, every thought should have for its object some useful purpose. Every stick of wood, ever stone, every piece of sod can be utilized. Did each one but train his eyes to see the use to which each object in this world can be put, how much happier the world would be."

"I made the will because I saw no reason why there should be such wastefulness, why so much good raw material should be allowed to go for naught.

"Why in this age should we cling to foolish, unhygienic, wasteful notions? The body, after the soul has fled, is just so much material to be moulded by man for his own use, as is everything else on this sphere.

"My will is perfectly feasible. My lawyer tells me that it cannot be contested on the ground of insanity. I realize that it is extraordinary, but I so will it as being consistent with my belief."

Doctoring Dangerous Animals.

One of the most difficult feats attempted by physicians is that of attending to wild animals who have become ill while confined in some of the big shows throughout the United States and Europe. When it is recalled that many an elephant, lion, or some huge boa constrictor is worth thousands of dollars, it is easy to understand that the very best trained and expensive of physicians are called in to operate on the sick animals. There is often danger attached to the work, although if the animal is known as very vicious it is usual to chloroform it before the physician begins his examination into the cause of the disease.

The methods of treatment resemble largely those used when human patients call on the family doctor, varied of course by the peculiarities of the animal. For instance, when a big Indian elephant gets the stomach ache, and they do this perhaps twice a year, there is considerable hard work to be done, and it must be done right away. For instance the elephant must be roped by all four legs and it must be done quickly, because an elephant with the stomach ache or acute indigestion (as it really is) is more dangerous by a good deal than a runaway locomotive.

Then he is thrown on one side and must be jumped on with the feet, in order to try to force the gas out of his system.

The ordinary kind of rubbing would not even penetrate an elephant's skin. Then comes a huge mustard plaster with blankets used to spread the mustard on and about 20 pounds of mustard to the plaster. Afterwards 2 quarts of whiskey and ginger should be poured down his throat. This treatment was used in the New York zoo not long ago and cured the elephant's stomach ache in a couple of hours.

A big Indian tigress named "Princess" in the London zoo had a bad record as a man eater near Mysore in India. She tried to kill anyone who approached her, and gave evidence of being in agony. All attempts to lasso this tigress were in vain, so one night a sponge soaked in chloroform was poked under her nose on a long stick. This dazed the tigress and a bag containing another chloroform soaked sponge was pushed over her head. Before she could get off the bag the anaesthetic had worked and the doctor quickly drained off a huge abscess which was found on one of the big teeth of the man eater. Monkeys and birds occasionally need surgical treatment and are not difficult to handle. The big inmates of the snake house, however, prove very hard to care for during illness. With a python 20 feet long, it is necessary for ten men to grasp the reptile and hold hard to overcome the resistance of the great coils.

International marriages are possibly no more dangerous than others among the leisure class, but they are more conspicuous.

Mark Twain says receivers are costly, and that's no merry jest.

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