

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS

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Rutland, Vt.

THE KING'S HERALD.

International Bible Lesson for Jan. 2,
1910—(Matt. 3:1-12).



John the Baptist is one of the most striking and fascinating characters in history. The story of his birth and childhood is given a large place in the Bible. The cousin of Jesus, six months older than the king of whom he was the herald, his ministry was pre-

eminently calculated to prepare the way of the Lord.

The Jews had a saying that their good things came from the wilderness; Moses, their lawgiver, the law itself, the tabernacle, and particularly their great prophet Elijah. Isaiah the prophet had spoken of a mysterious one who should be like a voice in the wilderness crying, "Prepare the way of the Lord." True to the ancient prophecy, when Christ was about 30 years of age, John the Baptist came forth from the wilderness, where like Moses, Elijah, and Paul afterwards, he had learned his message amid the solitude of the desert, alone with God.

His appearance was wild, his advent startling. Like Elijah, his great prototype he was clad with the skins of beasts and was nourished with the dried locusts of the wilderness and the honey gathered with his own hands from the rocks. And his message was full of fiery reproof and terrible warning. The times demanded a thunder storm to clear the moral atmosphere. Gentle corruption and Jewish hypocrisy, everywhere prevailed, and without respect of persons John hurled his fiery message against the sins of all classes; the tetrach and his paramour, the publicans and their extortions, the soldiers and their violence, the Rabbis and their false traditions, the Pharisees and their hypocrisies; demanding from all alike, contrition, confession, restitution, conversion. There was one word that was the key note of all his ministry: It was the single word Repent.

Repentance Demanded.

And a mighty reformation broke out, as fire breaks out in dry grass of the prairie, and in a few days the whole country was in a religious conflagration. Perhaps such a revival the world has never seen. Tens of thousands of people flocked from every direction until the wilderness of Judea became a vast camp meeting with penitents thronging the preacher. Nobles, ecclesiastics, soldiers, publicans crowded to the baptismal waters, confessing their sins and seeking divine forgiveness. The whole nation seemed swept off its feet by the supernatural tidal wave of regeneration.

Yet in the midst of all this ecstasy of piety and almost universal success John the Baptist kept a level head, and never forgot the fact that he was only the herald, the forerunner, the doorkeeper, the avant courier of the King. They tried to fawn upon and flatter him, but he instantly repelled them. They sought for his genealogy, and his pedigree and he said in effect, "Don't look for it. It doesn't matter. I am nothing but a voice, and I have only one thing to do, and that is to cry, 'Prepare the way of the Lord.'" I am only the friend of the Bridegroom, getting you ready to receive him. I am only a morning star to herald the dawn and then be quenched in the blaze of the King of day. I am the last prophet of the old dispensation and the first of the new, I shall soon withdraw from sight. He must increase, but I must decrease. I baptize you with water, He shall baptize you with fire.

That was the message of John and it awoke the nation like a trumpet blast. Is such preaching as that needed to-day? How many sermons have you ever heard on the subject of repentance? We have fallen upon a time when it is not considered good form to utter such a disturbing word in many quarters. There is sin in high places and in low places, sin jeweled, perfumed, brilliant, flagrant, bewitching, thrusting its smirking face into all circles of society, but how few there are with the spirit of John the Baptist to tear off the mask of beauty and reveal the death's head behind it.

But it is evermore true that the king can not come into his own until the way is somehow prepared before him. Not by ignoring, humoring sin can the highway be cast up for his advancing feet. To break a road through the wilderness is rough work. It is no holiday task, it cannot be done in dressing gown and slippers. It requires a vast amount of cutting, and uprooting, and ploughing, and filling, and blasting, and excavating. But when it is done there is a broad and level highway where once a tangled jungle obstructed progress, and over such a turnpike the king will come. We cannot all be reformers like John the Baptist, but we can hearken to and obey the voice of such a messenger when he appears and thus prepare the way of the Lord and make His paths straight.

TWO ENGLISH BATHTUBS.

One in the Kitchen Floor, the Other Kept in a Closet.

There is a certain bathtub known more or less to the history of humor which was so nicely adjusted to the



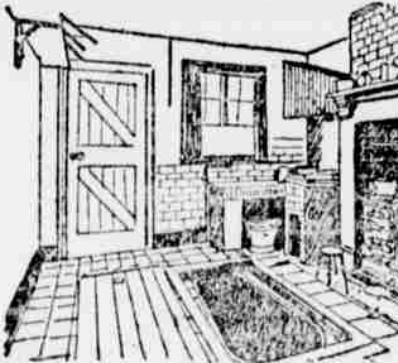
Bath that Shuts Up in Closet.

needs of its owner that he had only to touch a button and it came rolling out to the middle of his room. Such convenience may not actually have been achieved by the plumbers and decorators who struggle so hard to supply comfort for those who can pay for it, but the existence of this trained tub was necessary to the point of the story, which wound up with the sudden entry of the tub containing the wife of the owner, who was just demonstrating its wonders to a stranger. The story has an element of improbability in the supposition that a tub with such intelligence would have presented its owner's wife to the gaze of his visitors even for the sake of exhibiting its own qualities.

No such feats ought to be expected from the kind of bathtubs shown in the picture. They are humbler adjuncts of the home and intended to fill a useful purpose. They are meant for the homes of English workmen, to economize space.

The sunken bath in the family kitchen is intended for small houses of the kind built now in the London suburbs for workmen. It has been found most useful in two family houses and saves space needed for a bathroom. It is not nearly so dangerously as it looks here.

The cover, which in the picture is up, completely hides the tub when it is not in use, so there is much less chance in reality than there seems to be from the picture for the cook to



Sunken Bath in Kitchen Floor.

fall in while she is preparing dinner. Nor would there be any likelihood of sparks from the stove falling on the skin of the careless bather, since the fuel is gas. The desirability of taking a bath in the kitchen is of course merely a matter of personal taste.

More desirable and also intended for the bedrooms of houses built for workmen is the other bathtub. That shuts up in such fashion as to require very little space. It is attached to a spring which raises it as soon as it is emptied of a certain weight of water, so there is no danger of its suddenly shutting up with the bather inside of it.

When not in use it is caught at the top, and when the door of the closet in which it stands is closed the tub remains in an upright position. The water and waste pipe are attached to the bottom end of the tub on which it stands in the closet. Once the door is closed the tub is as much out of the way as if it were in a room reserved exclusively for it.

Availability.

A nobleman was once showing a friend a rare collection of precious stones which he had gathered at a great expense and enormous amount of labor. "And yet," he said, "they yield me no income."

His friend replied, "Come with me, and I will show you two stones which cost me but five pounds each, yet they yield me a considerable income." He took the owner of the gems to his grist-mill and pointed to two gray millstones, which were always busy grinding out grist.—Success Magazine.

When He Came Home.

One of the neighbors who was visiting the home of little Dummick, aged three, said, "Dummick, I want you to go along home with me, and how long will you stay?" Dummick put up four fat little fingers, saying, "I will stay these many days and come home on my thumb."—The Delinicator for August.

Left Over.

Barbara, aged four, had always been allowed to make small cakes out of the scraps of dough left from the morning's baking, so one morning after being sent to gather eggs, she came running in with a very tiny one and exclaimed, "Oh, mamma! see this little egg, it must be that's all the dough the hen had left."—Delinicator.

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