

Saturday Night Talks

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

CITIZENS AND ALIENS OF THE KINGDOM.

International Bible Lesson for Feb.
27, '10.—(Matt. 7:13-29.)

Every nation has its citizenry, those who speak its language, support its institutions, love its government, follow its flag. They sing, "My Country 'Tis of Thee." They rear their homes, and educate their children, and invest their money, in the land of their nativity. They were cradled in their fatherland and they expect to be buried among their kindred in the land they call home.

But in every nation there are to be found a class of people who are aliens and foreigners. They confess that they are strangers. They are far from home. For the purpose of trade, or the enjoyment of travel, or for educational purposes they sojourn for a time among those in whom they are interested, but they do not owe allegiance to the government, they do not invest their money, they do not take upon themselves any obligations, they hold themselves ready to pack up and depart at a moment's notice, they expect to return to their own land sooner or later. They live side by side with the citizens of the country, but so far as citizenship goes there is all the difference in the world between them.

So it is with the Kingdom of Heaven. There are citizens of that Kingdom, and there are those who are aliens and foreigners to it. The apostle writing to a certain class of people said, "Now therefore, ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." And Christ in our lesson to-day says, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven."

Church Not the Kingdom.

It is evident therefore that the church is not the Kingdom of Heaven. Church membership may be the same thing as citizenship and it may not. All church members are supposed to be natives of the kingdom, but their fruits show that oftentimes they are only aliens masquerading under the guise of citizenship for some personal reason. A life insurance agent joined the church in a certain place, and when he had succeeded in writing insurance policies for the most of the brethren he suddenly had a change of heart that took him off in another direction. He came in evidently in order to shear the sheep. Church membership will never save anybody. Creeds may be subscribed to, confessions of faith may be accepted, the pew may never be vacant in the house of God, and yet the individual be an utter stranger and foreigner to the commonwealth of Israel.

Infalible Tests.

There are two infalible tests of citizenship. The first test is character fruit. The test of all religious teaching is its practical result in the lives of those that receive it. The answer to modern eulogists of Buddhism and Confucianism is India and China; the answer to Mohammedanism is Turkey. When men sneer at Puritanism point them to New England; when they claim that "pure religion" is all that is necessary show them the Bible trodden under foot in Paris.

The Fruit Test.

And what is true in general is true in particular. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs from thistles. The tree that professes to be an orange tree must bear oranges. As a tree it may be beautiful, broad-branched, full of leaves, and birds, and blossoms but if it bears crab apples instead of oranges it is a fraud in the pomological realm. In other words, men are known by what they are rather than by what they say they are. A real professor of religion on the outside of the fence of the church is of more value to the world, so far as fruit goes than a sham professor of religion inside the fence of the church. And that is not saying anything against the church for without doubt the vast majority of real, genuine Christian fruit trees are within its gates. And all of them ought to be. Nevertheless, fruit is fruit wherever you find it, and you sometimes come upon it in unexpected places. All such do the will of God.

The Foundation Test.

Another test is the foundation upon which men build personal character. Christ said, "These saying of mine" are a rock foundation, and all other ground is sinking sand. The matter resolves itself into a selection of granite or gravel, on the rock or on the sand. Everything depends upon the kind of foundation you erect your soul structure upon, and the material you incorporate into the building. For faith makes a Christian, life proves a Christian and trials confirm a Christian. The providential afflictions of life may be likened to torrents of rain, the passions of men may well represent the impetuous floods, and the spiritual attacks from the invisible world of evil are often like the cyclones and whirlwinds that swoop down threatening to carry everything before them. In such hours of trial and tempest he who is built upon the rock will weather the gale, while he who is located on shifting, treacherous sand will be washed away in ruin.

SLED RUNS ON LEVEL.

Propeller Has Teeth That Dig Into Crust of Snow.

If somebody would only invent a sled that would run uphill, the small boy's winter joy would be complete. A Kansas man has taken a step in the right direction by devising a sled that



will run on the level. This sled is equipped with rows of teeth attached to bars that slide backward and forward through brackets along the sides. The bars are operated by pivotally attached levers, which are pushed back and forth by the person on the sled. The teeth are also pivotally attached and dig into the crust of the snow only when the bar is pushed forward. At other times they drag along on the top. With a sled equipped in this fashion a boy may sit down comfortably at his front door and propel himself merrily along until he reaches the hill where he wants to "coast." The propelling device is so constructed that it does not in any way interfere with the progress of the sled down hill, where the levers then act as guides.

The Largest Dog in the World.

In the town of Rutland, Vermont, lives Nero, a huge German and English mastiff, who enjoys the distinction of being probably the largest dog in the world.

Nero is owned by Judge Wayne Bailey, of Rutland, who is very fond of his pet. From tip to tip Nero meas-



ures seven feet four inches, and he tips the scales at two hundred and eighty-five pounds.

He stands nearly three feet in height, and he measures round his girth fifty-two inches. The circumference of his brass collar is thirty-two inches, and his foreleg measures sixteen and one-half inches.

Nero is very fond of the fair sex, and is a special favorite with ladies and children.

But when a strange man approaches his kennel, in Judge Bailey's back yard, let him beware, for Nero is not partial to strangers. One day a peddler visited the Judge's house, and when Mrs. Bailey refused to buy of his wares, he threw himself in a fit of rage upon the floor. Mrs. Bailey called Nero, and with a bound the mastiff came to her rescue. The peddler went away in a hurry.

Nero's daily rations consist of a big pan of cornmeal and milk. This is his only meal, and strange to say, for no large dog he has a light appetite.

Judge Bailey has been offered large sums for Nero, but has never shown any desire to part with him.

In Rutland Nero is a prime favorite with all who know him.

A Native Product.

Sometimes the thought that is most labored for proves most elusive. Many persons who believe that they can say what they mean are surprised by this discovery in trying to compose a concise, effective letter, or advertisement, or after-dinner speech, or even a telegram. The commonplace inscriptions which may often be read on medals, and public monuments and tombstones, were no doubt chosen after much thought, and in despair of the inspiration that failed to come.

The inhabitants of a French village built a bridge. It was a fine structure, and ought to be decorated with a suitable inscription. The brightest minds of the village grappled with expressed the pride and satisfaction of the townspeople.

The tablet that was finally put up read, "This bridge was made here."

Explicit Directions.

The Langworths lived in a corner house so easily accessible from the street that they were continually being annoyed by persons ringing to ask where other people lived. At last the son of the house, says a writer in the New York Times, decided to put an end to the nuisance.

"I guess," he said, complacently, "there won't be any more folks asking if the Browns, the Biddies or the Hansons live in this house. I've fixed 'em."

"What have you done?" queried Mrs. Langworth.

"Hung out a sign,"
"And what did you print on it?"
"Just five words," replied Harold proudly. "Nobody lives here but us."

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