

THE PULPIT.

AN ELOQUENT SUNDAY SERMON BY THE REV. JOHN C. AGER.

Theme: Casting Out Evil Spirits.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—In the Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian), the pastor, the Rev. John Curtis Ager, preached Sunday morning on "Casting Out Evil Spirits," a sermon suggested by the Emmanuel Movement.

The Lord's twelve disciples were exceptional disciples only in the sense that they were types of representatives of discipleship. That is, the outward duties and powers and privileges which the Lord conferred upon these twelve men were divine types or symbols of the spiritual duties and powers and privileges that are conferred upon all true disciples of the Lord.

To the new church, on the other hand, this is a vital truth, both as a fundamental philosophical principle and as a practical doctrine. A century and a half ago Swedenborg set forth with crystal clearness a truth that recent philosophy has been making a good deal of, the truth of the solidarity of the human race.

Every individual soul in its true order is a finite image of the infinite, and is therefore made up of numberless functions and powers and parts, from the highest to the lowest. This complex organism the divine life flows in an unceasing stream. Modern psychology teaches that our consciousness covers only a part of this mental organism, the part that lies next to our bodily sensations, and therefore the lowest or outermost part.

And as consciousness is an essential element of all choices and determinations, and it is by choices and determinations that character is determined, so it is only this lower outer-conscious region of our life into which spiritual disorder or evil can enter.

All these regions of the human soul, from highest to lowest, are merely organs, vessels or receptacles, and are living only by virtue of the unceasing inflow of life into them. Into the highest or innermost region of the soul the divine life flows directly from the Lord. This region lies above or within all human and angelic consciousness, and forms the eternal connection between the finite and eternal life and the finite life, ensuring to the human soul its endless existence.

All this may sound like mere speculation; but it is, in fact, only a somewhat elaborated way of saying that everything good and true in human life is from the Lord, and everything evil and false is of the devil and from the devil.

Thus what we find ourselves dealing with in our experiences with wrong thoughts and feelings is other personalities. Whether they are living in this world or the spiritual world we do not know, and it makes no inessential difference to us whether they are living in this world or the spiritual world.

From these words we may be assured in the first place that this authority over unclean spirits to cast them out is bestowed by the Lord only upon His disciples. Therefore, if we wish to possess this power over the infernal influences that are stirring up wrong thoughts and feelings in us we must be disciples of the Lord.

Calling His disciples unto Him, the Lord gave them this power. The Lord calls to us in every truth about right living that we will heed to, and we listen to His call whenever we see any truth as His truth, and therefore as the true wisdom of life.

Such is the authority over unclean spirits that the Lord bestows upon all disciples. The only condition necessary to receiving it is to be a disciple of the Lord. The twelve disciples did not ask for this authority. It was a token, and the chief token, of discipleship. So if we do not possess this power it is because we are not disciples of the Lord.

Getting Even—With What? When one person has wronged another, the unjustly injured person is always, for the time being, on a higher plane than the one who has done the injury.

What an ingenious tempter Satan is, to persuade us to add injury to injury to ourselves! For that is what "getting even" accomplishes; it is injuring ourselves and our standards to the level at which we have wronged us.

The Sunday-School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR MAY 17.

Subject: Jesus Betrayed and Denied, John 18:1-27—Golden Text, Matt. 17:22—Commit Verses 2, 3—Commentary.

TIME.—Wednesday morning early, April 5, A. D. 39. PLACE.—Gethsemane and Courtyard of Annas. EXPOSITION.—I. The Perfidy of Judas, 1-8. Jesus lauded them for their faith in prayer. The awful weight of agony was crushing Him (Matt. 26:38). But He must strengthen the disciples and fortify them against the coming trial.

II. Jesus Predicts His Own, 4-9. Jesus knew that at last the awful hour that He had so long looked forward to with sorrow unspeakable had come. He knew all that was coming upon Him, but He did not shrink. He went forth with a steady and undaunted heart. He put to Judas and his band a question that had more in it than appears.

III. Peter Denies His Lord, 24-27. Peter following his Lord at this time got him into trouble. Furthermore, he had followed his Lord afar off (Matt. 27:55). If now Jesus knew that he would deny him, he had warned him of it (ch. 13:38). Furthermore, just before this He had given His disciples a hint that they were to go away (v. 8). He had told Peter on the preceding evening that he could not follow him at this time, but that he should later (ch. 13:36), and Peter had turned a deaf ear to all this.

Getting Even—With What? When one person has wronged another, the unjustly injured person is always, for the time being, on a higher plane than the one who has done the injury. The wronged one has lost what the other has lost. The only way to make the loss equal is for the injured one to "get even."

Real Prayer. In souls filled with love the ambition to please God is real prayer. "That file fish is asleep," said the attendant.

Hard Fate. Chancellor Kirkland, of Vanderbilt University, like others of similar office, is known to his students by the brief name of "Chance."

EPWORTH LEAGUE LESSONS

SUNDAY MAY 17. Our Calling. (1 Cor. 1, 28; Phil. 3, 8-16)—Epworth League Anniversary.

The Epworth League is a company of people that are called. It is not perfect, or it would not exist. It is a group with unmeasured possibilities. The people of middle life will live out their lives on their present level; you know what they will do and what they will be until the end.

The young people are called to the practice of the Christian life. If Christian service and the study of the Bible and interest in all forms of the kingdom's progress are to mark our mature life, they must be provided for now. You cannot force new interests upon old people.

The young people are called to be merciful. One of the sad things about middle life and old age is that the sympathies have been blunted. If you are going to possess tenderness and gentleness and pity and helpfulness in the years that are to be, you must care for these things now.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

MAY SEVENTEENTH. Being a Christian. II. At Home and in School. 1 Chron. 13: 12-14; Isa. 54: 13. (Union Meeting with the Juniors.)

Justice and kindness. Eph. 6: 1-4. Obedience. Prov. 6: 20-22. Instruction. Ex. 13: 8-10. Teachableness. 1 Sam. 3: 1-10. Some are afraid of household religion; the ark of God seems something awful. But others know God as a dear household friend, though a mighty one.

Children are taught of God whenever they are taught God's truth, in any field. The teaching most necessary for children is the teaching of God; that alone brings peace and power. Thoughts. If you are not a Christian at home, then you are not a Christian anywhere else.

Life is an ellipse with two foci, the home and the school. Put Christ in both. The home is the fountain of life on earth; if it is pure, the life may never become muddy. But if it is muddy, the life is not likely to become pure.

Discovery and Existence. A very charming woman was relating to a group of interested listeners the rather pathetic story of a young girl who had contracted yellow fever from a box of lace purchased for her bridal clothes and mailed to her from New Orleans.

Professor T. D. A. Cockerell, of the University of Colorado, describes a well-preserved specimen of a wasp, belonging to the genus Paratylis, found in the shale rocks of Miocene time at Florissant, Col., which exhibits a peculiar venation of the wings, exactly as it appears in the same genus to-day.

FARMING IN TUSCANY.

By E. K. PARKINSON. Bordering the west coast of Italy and protected from the cold north wind by the Apennine mountains, is the province of Tuscany with Florence as her chief city.

The second lot are crushed, the process is gone through twice with each lot and the result is an oil of the first quality. Second quality oil is made by turning boiling water on the olive "paste" and grinding and pressing once more.

The farm work is all done by a pair of beautiful white Tuscan oxen, whose strength is prodigious. He tells how he once saw a restive ox, who was about to be shod, by one kick floor six men who, with a rope passed round a tree, were tugging at his hind leg.

Wooden Plows in Use. The plow which does duty in these orchards is a block of wood hewn out of an oak stump, with its tip shod with iron.

How the Farms Are Worked. In Tuscany the farms are worked on the following system: The man who owns the farm and the man who works it share the profits and losses.

After Easter day the farmer brings his landlord a present of a fine live capon and a dozen eggs, which are considered his perquisites and are never forgotten. In June the little figs appear, which ripen in August.

Flens and the Plague. It has long been known that rats are an important cause of the spread of plague, but more recent researches seem to indicate that fleas serve as an intermediate link in conveying the disease from rats to men.

Too High. As to the cost of living, there is room for debate on some features, but some of the following, all of which come too high: The fees of retailers, the prices of prize fighters, the salaries of grand opera singers, the price of a carriage ride, the expected, or exacted, at luncheon time.

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PEARL STRINGING AS A BUSINESS

Opportunity to Create a New Vocation in the Care of Gems and All My Lady's Jewelry—A Chance to Add to a Slender Income.

A very valuable string of pearls should be restringed every month if one would be on the safe side, for there is always the danger of the silken cord rubbing against a diamond brooch at the back of the collar and one or more of the delicate strands being broken, thus making the waxed threads too thin to hold together for many days.

Blessing the Oxen. In February comes St. Anthony's day, a great day for the patient oxen for it is their saint's day, and the village priest is coming to bless them.

Harvest Days. The peasants around Florence have an old custom called "Lighting up the corn," which they all respect. On St. Andrew's day, as soon as night falls, all the contadini sally forth and with lighted wicks in their hands, make a complete circuit of all their fields in which the young wheat is growing.

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