

THE PULPIT.

A SCHOLARLY SUNDAY SERMON BY THE REV. C. B. ETLER.

Theme: Seeking God's Kingdom.

Brooklyn, N. Y.—In the Church of the Good Tidings the pastor, the Rev. Clarence Barlett, preached the following Sunday on "Seeking God's Kingdom."

In bygone years, when people went upon the theory that man is inherently depraved and that his natural allegiance was to the devil, in those days, when one talked about seeking God's kingdom, it meant that a man should shut out the sunshine and enjoyment from his days; that he should crucify his nature upon the cross of self-denial and that through a sad and doleful earthly life he should look forward with patient longing for the kingdom that he must seek in some future world.

When man complained of earthly hardship and sought religion's help, the church said, "In substance to him, 'Yes, we know it's hard living in this world, but what can you expect; man is naturally a fallen, degenerate creature, the devil is his spiritual adviser and his man of business; but never mind, grin and bear it, for you will find God's kingdom when you die and there the devil will be no more."

Such a philosophy and such a religion was but a cowardly subterfuge whereby an easy escape was afforded from the necessity for working out a solution for the hard problems of this life.

Thank God, the liberal church has cut loose from dogmatic tradition and is teaching a religion not of mysticism and of theory, but a religion of present helpfulness and of common sense.

We do not believe in a fallen race. We believe in a rising race. We do not believe in original and inherent sin, nor that every man that's born is born first into the kingdom of the devil.

And this we believe is the first step in seeking God's good kingdom: the recognition that every child that's born is God's and not the devil's; the good tidings that every soul has within itself the spark of divinity and not the flame of hell.

It's true that some of us are born with heritages of sin and with birthmarks of imperfection; but the good tidings of great joy is this: That whatsoever sins of the fathers may have set the children's teeth on edge, those children have another heritage from their perfect heavenly Father—a heritage that can overcome and undo all the sins of the fathers; that can round out in perfect growth all human imperfection. He who would seek God's kingdom talks not of original sin; he publishes good tidings of ultimate perfection.

What does it mean for us, this seeking for God's kingdom? We rise with the new day and the sun shines brightly through the windows. "Oh," says one, "the harsh light hurts my eyes," or, "It's a woman of one kind, she says, 'It will fade my carpet' and the gloom of a sepulchre ensues."

Another throws wide the windows of his house and soul and drinks in the life sustaining oxygen, basks in the blessed warmth of nature's medicine and sings an unconscious song of praise to his maker and his life keeper.

He is seeking God's kingdom. And then at the breakfast table one takes his place with no word of greeting and devours his breakfast in silence, for a muffin splatters, that the toast is scorched or the coffee cold. The other, the sunshine fellow, comes in with the glow of the sun's radiance still upon him, and the room seems brighter for his coming. He has a joke and a smile for all, even for the fellow with the scorching scow. Which one is seeking, is getting nearer to the kingdom?

And then they are out upon the way to business. The car is crowded, and when the conductor gets to our island, he scowls, he looks straight at the conductor, but makes no move to get a nickel, and then through all the remainder of the trip he shrinks and starts whenever he's spoken to and wonders if he has been spotted. Finally, he slips into a seat, and although a woman sits beside him with a child in her arms, he takes intense interest in the paper he has lifted from the seat.

He is getting very near to God's kingdom? The other traveler behind an old man board the car and cheers the wretched fellow with a good word and a friendly smile. He hears with understanding ear the conductor's gruff, "Step lively," and sees with understanding eye the same conductor very gently shove into the car an overburdened daughter of poverty, as she in turn supports her feeble mother. He hears with understanding ear, as the conductor comes down hard upon the ignorance of some poor foreigner as he asks directions, and he sees with understanding eye as that same conductor sneaks up a little later and gives the bewildered foreigner gruff, though kindly, instructions how to find his way. He hears and sees understandingly, I say, for he is an optimist, and he is seeking for God's kingdom, although he may know it not. He is looking for the good in men because he knows it is there.

As a man thinketh in his heart is he, and whether we shall be seekers for God's kingdom of truth or servants of the kingdom of the devil depends upon our purity of heart.

The kingdom within determines the kingdom without; if the kingdom within be the kingdom of truth, of purity, of unselfish kindness, then we will find heaven without seeking very far. We sometimes talk about seeking God's kingdom, as though it must come through some mighty upheaval of nature or through some revolution. God doesn't work that way. Superstitious persons have arisen at various times and have proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom, but a short time since a seer in New England predicted the end of the world and the ushering in of heaven. And now they are probably figuring out some future date for the coming of God's kingdom with the crash of thunder and the rending of the earth.

God doesn't work that way. "And another parable he spake unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Could any type make plainer to us the process for the realization of God's kingdom on the earth than this parable of the leaven, working silently and slowly, growing gradually from one little germ until the whole mass is alive and rising. Could any parable be more realistic? God's spirit dwelling in every man, but a little spark of divinity

is enfolded in the infant; creeping through the human heart silently but surely, making the life action blossom in unselfish deeds, in purity and worth.

Yes, indeed, God's kingdom is very near to us, it's in us and about us, and we can find it right speedily if we but fix our eyes upon the eternal life that is to be had for the coming of His kingdom. Don't expect the leaven to be in disorderly shouting of false prophets. Don't expect the leaven to be untrue to its very nature. Don't look for evidences that God's righteousness has, oh! so much of sin to still swallow in its life. Fix your eyes upon Jesus, fit your eyes upon the evidences within yourself, evidences all about you, evidences that God's spirit is living in all life, evidences that the leaven is fulfilling its mission, evidences that His eternal truth is marching on.

This world of ours is not so bad, if we don't fix our whole attention on the badness and refuse to recognize the silent working of the leaven of eternal goodness that permeates it all. Seeking God's kingdom or seeking the kingdom of the devil has been accomplished for us in the present political campaign. Mud-slinging and the kind of argument expected at a reunion of the Kilkenny cats has seemed to be the policy of some, with the result that up-State citizens believe New York is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, that hungry beasts of prey roam through the streets and that the only safety for a stranger is to tightly grasp his bank roll in one hand and his watch within the other while he loomed to our city.

And yet how much of truth there is in the lurid exaggerations of our cities' sinfulness may be gauged, perhaps, by the uniformity of compliments paid to us by our host of visitors during the late celebration. Yellow journalism is always looking for the spot that blemishes its reflection; recognize the good and by perverse suggestions hampers more than any other element the working of the leaven of God's eternal righteousness.

The kingdom of the living God must come first of all in individual hearts, for there the leaven has been placed by God. His kingdom will not come in any outward way until the inward man is pure.

Don't wait and pray for the last trump on earth, don't wait and pray for the last judgment day. God's trump is sounding in your heart and your judgment days are with you every day. Look for God's kingdom in your own heart and seek to manifest it in your little duties every day. Seek to attain your soul to the divine melodies of goods that are echoing all around you. Open your eyes to the good within yourself, and that you find in fellow-men. Shut out from your soul the discordant clangor and refuse to share the discord selfish hearts have brought on earth. Fix your eyes upon Jesus and feel the leaven in your inmost heart.

How to find God's kingdom? It's a plain and direct road. Simply publish peace and bring good tidings; always and forever bring good tidings. You can't bring tidings that are good to men and tear each other apart. Refuse to publish discord and strife and hatred. Refuse to muck-rake or bring up the ghosts of outgrown errors that clog the wheels of eternal progress toward perfect righteousness.

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The Sunday = School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR JANUARY 16.

Subject: The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry, Matt. 4:12-25—Commit Verse 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The people which sat in darkness saw great light." Matt. 4:16.

TIME.—Summer A. D. 28. PLACE.—Galilee, especially Capernaum.

EXPOSITION.—Matt. 4:12-17. The imprisonment of John led Jesus to forsake Judea for Galilee (v. 12; cf. Mk. 1:14). It was an act of prudence on His part. He also left His boyhood home, Nazareth, for busy Capernaum by the sea, His going to the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (vs. 15, 16; cf. Is. 9:1, 2). Galilee had enjoyed no such privileges as Judea had. The people had sat in darkness. The Galileans were despised for their ignorance of the other Jews (cf. Jno. 7:52). But now they were to see a great light (v. 16). The Light of the world was to live among them (Jno. 8:12). Hitherto they had "sat in the region and shadow of death," now they were to enjoy the Light of life. Sooner or later God sends His light to all people and those who enjoy the least privileges in one age will enjoy the greatest in another. The time had now come for Jesus to begin His ministry of preaching. He began with the same message with which John had begun, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (cf. Matt. 3:2). The first part of the cry was the same as that of the Old Testament prophets (Is. 55:7; Jer. 3:22; Ezek. 34:6; 18:30; 33:9; Hos. 12:4; Joel 2:12). The kingdom of heaven was at hand because the King Himself was at hand, and if the Jews had received Jesus He would have set up the kingdom of heaven on earth then and there. As He was rejected and crucified, the kingdom was postponed.

II.—"Come Ye After Me, and I Will Make You Fishers of Men," 18-22. Matthew tells us only of the call of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. Luke tells us of how the Lord had won their confidence by the miraculous draft of fishes preceding the call (cf. Luke 5:2-9). Simon and Andrew were attending to their own proper business when Jesus called them to leave their nets and follow Him. He called them to leave their nets and follow Him. He called them to leave their nets and follow Him. He called them to leave their nets and follow Him.

III. Jesus Teaching, Preaching and Healing, 23-25. Jesus' earthly ministry was threefold: teaching, preaching, healing. He taught in their synagogues as long as they would permit it. That was where the people gathered and that was where He went. The word translated "Preaching" means "heralding." He heralded the coming of the kingdom and "Gospel" means "good news," and there is no better news than that the kingdom of God is to be established on earth and that Jesus is to be the King. Jesus had a Gospel for the body as well as for the soul, and today the Kingdom of God is within you (Rom. 8:11; Jas. 5:14, 15). But Jesus' method of healing was as wide apart as the poles from that of the modern healer. There were no treatments and He never charged for His healing. It was also utterly different from the methods of the "Immanuel Movement." There was nothing that smacked of hypnotism or other forms of demonism. All manner of diseases and all manner of sickness yielded to His divine power, but because He healed men's infirmities, men will go hundreds of miles to get in contact with a healer, but will not go a block to hear a teacher. The popularity that came to Him by His healing was very distasteful to our Saviour (cf. Mk. 1:43, 45).

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OUR TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

REPORTS OF PROGRESS OF THE BATTLE AGAINST RUM.

Railways and Drink.

That railway accidents in this country are due, in some degree, to the use of alcohol by employees, is asserted, at least by implication, by Dr. Henry O. Marcy, of Boston, in a leading article in the Quarterly Journal of Inebriety.

Dr. Marcy emphasizes the point that it is not sufficient for treatment to keep from drinking while on duty, they should be abstainers; otherwise their nerves will not be strong enough to stand the strain of their occupation. Most railroads do not go as far as this. Says the writer: "The railroad authorities of the United States are widely awake to the dangers to their various systems, from the monetary standpoint as also from a humanitarian point of view. As I have just shown, every railroad wreck involves a large loss of life and property. These great companies not alone to especially train their important servants, watching carefully over their physical condition, seeing to it that, as far as possible, their duties are assigned to them at regular hours, with an insistence of taking proper rest and food, and then demand of them when on duty the highest type of possible efficiency."

"In the army, no matter how fatigued, the sentinel has his four hours of rest and his two hours of watchful vigilance. He is not to be lulled during these two hours may endanger the entire camp. Woe be then to the sentinel caught sleeping at his post. A court-martial and execution swiftly follow as a stern warning to the future. In a large sense the engineer and trainman are sentinels on duty, upon every one of the numberless trains traversing the country. While we may not shoot such delinquent servants, we certainly should bring to bear every possible effort to secure from them the best and safest service. Hence the wisest teachings of the effect of alcohol upon the human system should be disseminated, and established among these men the esprit de corps of the service."

After quoting letters from officials of the New York Central, Boston and New Haven and Hartford roads, from which it appears that these three companies absolutely prohibit the use of intoxicants by employees on duty, Dr. Marcy says: "These letters show a commendable spirit of watchfulness on the part of the managers of our great railroad systems, and I doubt not similar rules are enforced with greater or less stringency upon all the railroads of the country. The rule of thirty years ago is now decidedly the exception, and of the type and character of our employees in their self-respecting manhood show a vast improvement. To those who desire to drink it is yet all too easy to furnish stimulants, but each year the responsibility is more and more placed upon the dispensers of alcoholic beverages, as well as those who partake of them."

"The London and Northwestern Company have established a Total Abstinence Union among its employees, which society now numbers over 1,000 members. The principal object of this society is not only to promote total abstinence among its members, but to lessen the risk and danger of the work and diminish accidents and lessen the worry and strain. All members of this union are put on the same footing as regards the increase of wages every five years if they remain in the same position and are total abstainers."

"The Midland Railway Company have encouraged their operatives to form total abstinence societies and to promote the same among their employees at any time or place. Preference is given to all persons applying for promotion and larger wages who belong to these societies. The company reports less loss from accidents and more perfect work by the members of this society."

Testimony From the Bench. Judge McAuley, of Kansas City, in committing a "plain drunk," gave utterance to the following words: "If I had my way I would not only close every saloon in the county Sunday and week days, but I would stop the sale of intoxicating liquor in any shape or for any purpose whatever. I would make it a crime to manufacture the stuff. This may be far reaching, but the sentiment is justified by the sights and experiences in this courtroom. Ninety-five per cent. of the cases tried here are the direct results of whisky; the other five per cent. includes morphine and cocaine fends and a few petty misdemeanors that come before me for adjustment."

"The woes that arise from the use of whisky, the ruined men and women, the broken families, the griefs and tears all aired in this courtroom are enough to turn gray the hair on a buffalo robe."

What Will Happen? "Saloonkeeper"—"If I am driven out of this business I won't know what to do." Searchlight—"Go into the tombstone business, and get the job of erecting monuments over the graves of those whose business has slain."

No Signs of Reaction. "Much has been said of a reaction in the sweeping movement which has made so much of the South and some portions of the North dry, but up to the present no substantial indications of that reaction are in evidence," declares the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

Temperance Notes. The citizen is the State. A drunken citizen means a drunken State. A pauperized citizen means a pauperized State. A corrupt citizen means a corrupt State.—Professor A. S. Hopkins, in "Front and Loss in Man."

The Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company, August 25, announced that it would hereafter refuse to re-employ any discharged motormen and conductors unless they would sign a total pledge. General Manager Kruger declared no exceptions would be made.

Nebraska Prohibitionists. In an enthusiastic two days' convention at York, Neb., canvassed the situation, and unanimously decided to launch a battle for State prohibition with a demand for county prohibition legislation at the next legislative session as a first step.

Whether the citizen shall be sober or drunk may be first a mere question with the man himself, but thereafter and directly in becomes a social question, ramifying through all the avenues of social interdependence, and eventually a political question. Hence the man is the unit of political sovereignty.

APPOINTMENTS. Belle—"But do you think you had better be suited to each other?" "Yes, Nell—"Oh, perfectly. Our tastes are quite similar, I don't care very much for him, and he doesn't care very much for me."—Figaro.

RELIGIOUS READING

FOR THE QUIET HOUR.

THE FEVER HEALED.

He touched her hands and the fever left her; Oh, we need His touch on our fevered hands; The cool, still touch of the Man of Sorrows, Who knows us and loves us, and understands.

It may be the fever of pain and anger, When the wounded spirit is hard to bear, And only the Lord can draw forth the arrows Left carelessly, cruelly, ranking there.

Whatever the fever, His touch can heal it; Whatever the tempest, His voice can still it. There is only joy as we seek His pleasure; There is only rest as we choose His will.—Christian Herald.

Christian Certainty. How can one be sure that he is a Christian? The Apostle John gives rules which are in harmony with other Scripture. "Hereby know we that we are in Him: Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." Obedience is a test. "Ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Another rule is in the words, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." And still another in these words, "We know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us." The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. John gives also a rule by which the Spirit may be known. "Hereby know we the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." He also declares his assurance of a future meeting with and likeness to Christ. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him."

John had faith in God as a hearer and answerer of prayer. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that His spirit will be known. "Hereby know we the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." He also declares his assurance of a future meeting with and likeness to Christ. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him."

With this assurance in regard to prayer is associated an assurance of sustaining grace in time of temptation. "We know that whosoever is of God, he shall overcome, because he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." This knowledge, however, did not make him careless in regard to sin, or vain of his security. He knew the weakness of the flesh, and the strength of temptation. Hence, summing up our knowledge of God and Christ, and our own security and eternal life, he said: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure," and closed his epistle with the exhortation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."—Herald and Presbyter.

A Windfall Message. It was easy for the gossiping woman in the old story to obey when her confessor told her to walk a mile, scattering feathers. But the other day she heard the voice most clearly, "John 8:43. There must be sympathetic attention before the words of Christ can be received and understood. It is not so much the keen mind as the right heart that is needed for the reception of divine truth."

John 8:47. The message here is the same. "He that is of God will be in the synthetic, receptive attitude, and thus 'hear the voice of God.'" "Ye are not of God" indicates that they had not this attitude and, therefore, could not hear his word.

Rev. 1:10. "In the Spirit" is thus the most propitious condition for hearing God's voice, and "on the Lord's day" should be an added influence in the same direction.

All of these texts agree in this, that the condition of hearing is the desire to hear. The man who is in rebellion against God has so broken connection with him that he is in a poor position to receive revelations from him. In Isa. 55:2, we are exhorted to "hearken diligently" that we may hear. Job 11:7, the question is asked, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" and the answer has come back many times, "No." But John tells us (1 John 4:7). "Everyone that loveth . . . knoweth God."

EXCUSED, WITH REASON. Judges listen to all sorts of excuses from men wishing to avoid jury duty, but seldom to one the pathos of which is as touching as the case of a frontiersman who rode over a hundred and twenty miles to state it. The incident occurred in California some years ago.

When Clerk Neale was calling the roll of the grand jury in department number one he came to the name of Joe Mandivil. At the sound of his name Mr. Mandivil stood up, tall, with slightly bent shoulders and with an air about him that bespoke the hardy frontiersman, he made a striking figure in the court room.

"Your Honor," said he, "I should like to make a statement."

The Court signified permission, and Mr. Mandivil continued: "I live away up the Colorado River, a long ways above Picocho Landing."

A few dapper young men about the court room smiled audibly, but the frontiersman ran his hand through his hair and continued: "Fact is, it's four hundred and twenty miles the way I have to come from my home to this city, and when I received word that I was summoned I didn't have the money for the trip and was compelled to borrow fifty dollars at two per cent. a month to pay my fare."

"I've got three little children out here on the desert, and they're all alone, for my wife died three months ago, and I ought to be home-looking after those kids right now."

No one thought of laughing. Even those well-dressed youths sobered up, not surprised, and all listened intently while the widower finished his story.

"I've had a little trouble lately," he said, simply, "and a lot of assessment work on some mines needs to be done. I ought to be there to do it, and