

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXIII.

POWER OVER DEMONS. Mark v. 1-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY v. 15.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. viii. 28-34; Luke viii. 26-30.

With vs. 1-5 read Eph. vi. 12; with vs. 6, 7, read 1 Kings xvii. 18, with vs. 8-10, Ps. ii. 10; with v. 11, Deut. xiv. 8; with vs. 12, 13, Jude v. 6; with vs. 14, 15, 1 Cor. vi. 11, and 2 Peter ii. 4.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Enmity between the serpent and the seed.

LEADING TEXT.—He that committeth the sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—1 John iii. 8.

That evil spirits exist is as certain as the existence of angels. They are in sympathy with Satan, their head, who is god of this world, in a limited sense (Job i. 12), and who is at war with Christ's kingdom. The advent of Christ was "the hour" of Satan, when he was allowed to do his utmost. Hence evil, malicious, fallen spirits, released for a time from their misery, to which they expected to be sent back (v. 7), "possessed," or held under control, in some cases, the minds of human beings (as in the case of divination, Acts xvi. 16), and in some instances both mind and body, the body through the mind, and disease of body being possibly the occasion of possession. Sometimes their power was used to bring the truth and miracles into disrepute, and to give colour to the idea that Beelzebub helped Christ; sometimes it was, apparently, in wanton cruelty, though, possibly, as in this case, as part of a scheme for defeating the truth.

When the Jews held erroneous views as touching ordinances, worship, the kingdom, the spirit world, Christ corrected them. He nowhere corrected their ideas regarding demoniac possession, or called the terrible misery disease; but he treated and spoke of the cases as possessed of demons, and addressed these demons as persons who could understand and must obey.

Much of this we can not understand, but all believe facts of the modes of which they are ignorant, as a child believes in an eclipse, without knowing its principle. It has been said that mental disease is called "lunacy," without our now believing the moon its cause; but if Jesus who never deceived, had dealt with "lunatics," and had addressed the moon as the cause, we should have to believe so. That some symptoms of some diseases were produced by demons may be simply because human beings are concerned in both cases; or demons may have taken advantage of disease; and that there is nothing of the kind now, cannot be proved; but if it could, that would not disprove what the Scriptures distinctly allege, then existed.

This explanation renders the lesson easier. We have.

I. HUMAN MISERY, vs. 1-5. The place was the country of the Gadarenes (see last Lesson for description), the "other side," the east of the Sea of Galilee, called the country of the Gadarenes or Gergesenes, the region called Decapolis (v. 20), from its ten cities. The man (one or two, Mark fixing attention on him who spoke), met Christ on landing. His home was among the tombs, which were heaped, like Christ's out of the rock (2 Kings xxiii. 16, 17). The hills of the place are fitted for excavations. Epiphanius—one of the Fathers—mentions these tombs. This dismal dwelling suited his gloomy temper. Attempts had been made to restrain him in vain (v. 3), the description of them very full. He had been abandoned as hopeless. A terror to his neighbours, and in torment himself, dead among the living, he haunted the place, and made the tombs yet more ghastly.

Here is the type of sin; possession of the devil, as a will within the human will, making violence, terror and misery. And man tries to restrain it, with prisons, penitentiaries, police; tries to cure it in reformatories, asylums, temperance societies, &c., and only succeeds so far as he calls in Christ's help. How many transgressors in a million-peopled city, pests to others, wretched themselves, defiant of human authority, thieves, drunkards, violent, desperate, to whom murder is only an incident! Wonderful that God spares us.

Let the young see in this wretched man, "crying and cutting himself," the type of full-blown evil—savage, blind, impatient of restraint, cruel, murderous. Sow no seed, in temper, passion, or strong drink, of which this is the fruit. Be thankful for the restraints of parents, home, school, God. This man had gained liberty indeed, but what a horrid liberty.

II. CONTACT WITH CHRIST. The light hurts diseased eyes. The good make the bad uncomfortable. Jesus' presence is suggestive of torment to this foul spirit. Yet his power is owned, "worshipped" (v. 6). "Devils believe and tremble," Jas. ii. 19. They know Jesus as the Son of the most High God (v. 7), and their judge. The evil spirit deprecates the word, "come out of him," which deprived him of the malicious pleasure, or the respite from woe, he enjoyed (v. 8). The sway over man is a diversion to devils. So bad men relieve themselves by venting their temper on dependents. Yet the evil spirit cannot keep away from the judge. So human criminals sometimes betray themselves by yielding to a certain strange fascination about the place, the details, or the punishment of their crime.

We can gather little from the reply (v. 9), or request (v. 10), of the unclean spirit. The word "legion," made familiar from the Roman conquest, meant a large indefinite number for the definite 6200 infantry and 780 cavalry of the Roman legion.

The region was Gentile. Josephus (Ant. xvii.) shows Gadara a Gentile city. The people had swine, which were feeding around. Anything seemed better than return whence they came. Hence the request to which Jesus says simply, "Go," without taking responsibility one way or

the other. Did they anticipate the result? (v. 14). Possibly not. Unclean spirits, like most criminals (contrary to the common impression), may be very stupid, or the author of evil may have foreseen a result not known to those wretched subordinates (v. 17), for the sordid Gadarenes heedless of the man cured, and alive only to their own loss, begged Jesus to leave.

III. HEALING FOR THE MAN. An interval passes long enough for the report to be carried to the town, and for the people to come out, and long enough for the man to be taken charge of by the friends to whom he had been such an affliction, and clothed. In this new guise they find him, at peace, "sitting," clothed, restored to human feeling and in his right mind, thinking and judging justly and intelligently, grateful for his deliverance. So Christ delivers from Satan's thralldom, by his word, effectually. He gives peace (Rom. v. 1), the best robe, and a "right mind." Enemies of God have a double feeling, even when sinning, a sense of something better, yet an impulse felt to be irresistible, to the worst, and the worst is typified in the swine—worthless as compared with man—hurried violently into the sea, drowned in perdition. He restores to manhood by expelling the evil. He takes away the stony heart out of our flesh and gives a heart of flesh (Ez. xxxvi. 26). He destroys the works of the devil (Col. ii. 15).

So we may (a) think highly of the word and power of Jesus (Col. i. 5, 6); (b) justly of the misery and degradation of being led of the devil (2 Cor. iv. 4); (c) of the malice, cunning and stupidity, craft over-reaching itself, of his agents; (d) and with discrimination of all means of checking and controlling the devil's servants, apart from the grace of Christ Jesus. To be delivered ourselves from any form of evil, let us go to Jesus. To him let us carry in prayer our fellow sufferers.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The scene of the miracle—why called Decapolis—by whom inhabited—the character of the people—the condition of the demoniac—meaning of the word—views of the Jews concerning—how endorsed by Christ—how far intelligible to us—difference between fact and mode of the fact—misery of this man—abode—habits—condition helplessness of the people—interview with Jesus—homage—answers—request—effect of its being granted—change in the man—new appearance—feeling—effect on the people and lessons to us.

St. Peter's at Rome

A correspondent of the Methodist, speaking of St. Peter's says he could no more describe it worthily than he could have designed it; that the sight of it was worth to him all else in Rome, rich as the Eternal City in history and art, that the first view of its disconcerting, and it is only after several visits, and much study, and careful comparison, that one comes to pronounce it, as it really is, the most noble and wonderful of the works of man. He contents himself with giving a few facts in figures;

St. Peter's is built in the form of a Latin cross, with a dome surmounting the centre. The lofty room is vaulted, coffered and gilded. The pavement is of colored marble, inlaid with profitable designs. On each side the nave are four pillars (each covering half the space of a first class American church), with Corinthian marble pilasters, and a rich entablature supporting the arches. These side arches are more than one hundred feet high, and beyond them are the vaulted aisles, surmounted, at regular intervals by majestic domes. Beyond the aisles are the numerous side chapels, each so large that it might serve for an independent church. In one of these, which occupies the extremity of the right transept, the famous Vatican Council was held, and the seats occupied on that occasion still remain. The front of this chapel is walled up to represent the facade of a church, and is sixty-five feet in height, extending a little more than half the distance from the pavement to the top of the arch of the transept.

The total length of St. Peter's is 614 feet. The height of the central dome in the interior is 405 feet; on the exterior, 418 feet, exclusive of the ball and cross. The church and chapels are filled with rich and costly monuments to the Popes and various Catholic sovereigns; but every thing is of such an enormous size, that one's comprehension of the vastness of the edifice is diminished, and it is only by observing the moving figures of living men and women that one can form any idea of its real proportions. Almost every great master is represented in the monuments and altar-pieces; but every thing is on so vast a scale that we need not look here for any artists' best work. There are but very few frescoes or paintings in St. Peter's, the colossal pictures in the domes and ceiling, and above the numerous altars, being mosaics. Seen near by (from the galleries that run around the interior of the dome) they are composed of rough bits of colored stone and glass stuck into a bed of cement with apparent haste and irregularity, but seen from below, they have all the softness, and delicacy, and truthfulness of a masterpiece. Seen from below, the figures of the Evangelists in the dome appear of life size; but some idea of their real proportions may be drawn from the fact that, by actual measurement, the pen which St. Luke holds in his hand is seven feet in length. Standing on the marble pavement below, the view of the dome is most glorious. It towers and expands above you with a sublimity equalled only by the genius of the immortal architect; and you are ready to forgive the "Church of Rome" for much of her wrong doing, since she alone (with her hand on all the sources of wealth and art in Christendom) could make such a peerless temple possible.

A correct idea of the size of St. Peter's at the Vatican can only be gained by ascending to the roof. The roof is nearly flat, and is composed of strong cement and flagstones. A high wall or balustrade surrounds it, and the laborers, who have their little dwellings built along the wall or in the numerous angles, are drawing about little waggon-loads of lumber and other little materials in the work of repairing constantly going on. These dwellings, with the

domes and peaks innumerable, make the place look like a good-sized village, with the main dome rising like a huge temple in the centre. The top of the dome is 300ft. above the level of the roof, and ascending this by a long and toilsome staircase, we get our best view of Rome and the Campagna, with the mountains and the sea beyond. The cost of the main building alone has been estimated at ten million pounds sterling; while the annual expence of repairs is six thousand three hundred pounds sterling.

How a Brahmin Became a Christian.

What could induce me to leave a comfortable position and come over to Christianity? Ah, I must thank Brahminism for that! I was taught that the Lord of the Brahmins drank up the whole of the Pacific and the Atlantic and the whole of the northern seas, and, credulous as I was, this was too much for my credulity. A great doubt was infused into my darkened soul, and that led me to study the whole subject of religion, Hindu religion, in its most popular forms, and in its philosophic form too. The philosophic form may be divided into two classes, atheistical and theistical. I will not say much of the atheistical form, because it is the fool that has said in his heart, There is no God. But according to the theistical form God has existed from all eternity, not as a personal agent, but as an eternal principle. That eternal principle lies in a state of quiescence, not conscious of its existence, and without life and motion, and it remains in that state for ages, and cycles of ages, and after the lapse of cycles of ages it somehow comes to consciousness, and then says, "I am," and has a volition. The genius of our language would lead us to presume that this eternal principle is a neuter gender. Well, we ask our great philosophers how the great eternal principle comes to consciousness, and then it says "I am, the great name by which God revealed himself to Moses," and then it begins to speak of man, women and children having emanated from this eternal principle, and after the lapse of 8,400,000 years—for they believe in the transmigration of souls man will return to this eternal principle again. And they say that as the froth of the sea is nothing but a part of the sea, so man and the whole world are parts of the Great Eternal Spirit, and will all get back into that spirit. This is Pantheism. They carry this out to its logical results. Human entity, apart from the Divine principle, is denied, human responsibility is denied, and human accountability. When man commits sin they hold that he does not commit sin. Man's sin becomes God's sin, man's folly becomes God's folly. Now when I came to know this blasphemous system, I made up my mind not to have anything to do with it. Then there was a vacuum formed in this heart of mine, and we in India do not like the idea of being without religion. However the idea of being without religion may be favorable in England and the United States, in India if they cannot have a true religion they will have a false one. Then my heart was drawn to that book, the Book of books, the Bible. On September 13th, 1843, I was enabled to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. If I had chosen to be a hypocrite I might have still remained among my own people, but I could not. Brahminism is closely intertwined with the daily life, and it is no easy matter to break off from it. It was very trying in some respects to make the change that I did. I was not afraid of being punished for so doing by my own people, for the protecting arm of Britain extends to India; but I had to give up a loving mother, three brothers and three sisters and a large number of first and second cousins, the last named being regarded in India as belonging to the same family as oneself. But the Lord Jesus has said that whosoever will not take up his cross and follow Him is not worthy of Him. I embraced Christianity and I found many of the precious promises of the blessed Saviour realized in my own case, especially the declaration, "Whosoever forsaketh father and mother, and brother and sister, and houses and land, hath a hundredfold more in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life." In how many different forms has this promise been realized in my experience in the last thirty years!—Narayan Sheshadri.

As a Man Thinketh.

Dr. Brown-Sequard, the eminent surgeon, in a lecture delivered in New York the other day, said: "The cure of any illness which does not consist in a disorganization of the tissues, can often be accomplished when the person thinks it can be done. If we physicians, who treat patients every day, had the power to make them believe that they are to be cured, we certainly would obtain less fees than we do, and I must say that the best of us would rejoice at it. There is no doubt at all that if we could give to patients the idea that they are to be cured they would often be cured, especially if we could name a time for it, which is a great element in success. I have succeeded sometimes, and I may say that I succeed more now than formerly, because I have myself the faith that I can in giving faith obtain a cure. I wish, indeed, that physicians who are younger men than myself, and who will have more time to study this question than I have, would take it up, especially in the cases in which there is a functional nervous affection only to deal with, as particularly, though not only, in those cases that a cure can be obtained. Indeed, a cure may thus be obtained in certain organic affections—even in dropsy it may lead to a cure. You know that it will stop pain; that going to a dentist is often quite enough to make the toothache disappear. I have seen patients come to me with a terrible neuralgia, who dreaded the operation I was about to perform, and just at the time I was to undertake it, ceased to suffer."

A man will always undergo great toil and hardship for ends that must be many years distant, as wealth or fame; but none for an end that may be close at hand, as the joys of heaven.—Hawthorn.

The Folly and Danger of Over-Dressing.

Wearing clothes unsuitable to the occasion, broadcloth for an ordinary working-suit, or a party dress in the street, or trailing long skirts in the dirt—is the easiest way of falling in to this fault; but, in general, the addition to the least thing more than enough is too much, is ridiculous, is over-dressing. Nothing is more surely fatal than piling it on.

And what is the use, after all, since the basement can and will caricature, if not outline, the parlor and the second floor front? Dress as you will, my ladies, when you have done your worst to destroy the effect of your natural attractions, and sally forth, on a Sunday morning, to hear your special reverend, with hair parted in the middle and such a heavenly smile, as he pats his mouth with white cambire (milk) worked in the corner, as he sweetly says "Beloved brethren" you see Bridget on the other side of the street, a finer lady than you, a higher heeled shoe than yours, a bigger chignon, and a more stunning hat than yours. She has spent her earnings thus, together with sundries from the basement, and fortune has favored her with shop keepers as well as you. Where you have diamonds, silks, velvet, gold and laces, she can make almost as good a show with glass, cheap silks, valveteens, brass and gold; put a gold band on your head, and she follows by putting a gilt robe on hers; and all the beef marrow in the market is ready for her thick locks—thicker than yours too, probably.

When Adolphus, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," has appropriated St. Clare's gorgeous flowered vest, St. Clare apologizes by saying, as the masters haven't brought up those poor devils any better than to find their chief good in such things, why, let them have them. Blunt Miss Ophelia answers by the close query, but why have you not brought them up better? Mesdames, with great respect, why don't you set the basement a better example?—The Household.

Deep humility is a young butwark, and it is only as we enter into it that we find safety and true exaltation.—John Woolman.

Kuonen, of Amsterdam, has published a paper disproving De Lagarde's notion that the Jews altered the chronology of Genesis that the Messial might not appear to have been born in Anno Mundi 5500.

A man once saved a very poor boy from drowning. After his restoration he said to him:

"What can I do for you, my boy?" "Speak a kind word to me sometimes," replied the boy, the tears gushing from his eyes, "I ain't got a mother, like some of them."

Lieutenant Curley, of the British Navy, a few years since gave his steam yacht for a mission ship to the Church of England Mission in Newfoundland. Now he has given himself to the work of ministering to poor fishermen on that cold island.

Joy and peace are not our salvation, nor is faith our salvation, nor our good works our salv. None of these can bring us any comfort or hope. Jesus now, Jesus always and forever, no one, nor anything but Jesus, is our salvation. He is all in all. All else is vain; our struggles, our prayers, our groans, are all in vain; there is no help for us but in Jesus.

In South India the London Missionary Society has 21 European and 11 native missionaries, besides 164 evangelists, catechists, and teachers, making the total working force 196. These care for 131 stations, with 8,009 native Christians and 5,228 scholars in the schools. From the south, as well as from the north of India, it is reported that the number of secret disciples is rapidly increasing and that caste is losing its power.

The Registrar-General estimates the population of the United Kingdom in the middle of this year, 1874, at 32,412,010, being 600,000 more than double the population enumerated at the first census of 1801. The population of Ireland in 1874—viz., 5,800,485—is only 84,000 more than in 1801. The population of Scotland in 1874—viz., 3,462,016—is 212,000 more than double the population in 1801. The population of England and Wales in 1874—viz., 23,648,609—is about 5½ millions more than double the population in 1801.

A Hindoo paper published in Bengal, Sojjana Rajana, speaks of the excellence of the Bible. In advocating the introduction of the Bible into government schools, from which British timidity, indifference and infidelity had excluded it, these heathen writers describe it as "The best and most excellent of all English books, and there is not its like in the English language. As every joint of the sugar cane, from the root to the top, is full of sweetness, so every page of the Bible is fraught with the most precious instructions. A portion of that book would yield to you more of sound morality than a thousand other treatises on the same subject. In short, if any person studies the English language with a view to gain wisdom, there is not another book as so worthy of being read than the Bible."—Southern Presbyterian.

Oh, what a place will you be shortly in of joy or torment! Oh, what a sight will you shortly see in heaven or hell! Oh, what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts with unspeakable delight or horror! What work will you be employed in? To praise the Lord with saints and angels, or to cry out in fire unquenchable with devils? And should all this be forgotten? And all this will be endless, and sealed up by an unchangeable decree. Eternity eternity will be the measure of your joys or sorrows, and can this be forgotten? And all this is true, sure, most certainly true. When you have gone up and down a little longer, and slept and awaked a few times more, you will be dead and gone, and find all true that now I tell you; and yet can you now so much forget it! You shall then remember that you were reminded of these things and perceive them matters a thousand times greater than either you or I could here conceive; and yet shall they now be so much forgotten!—Baxter.

Random Readings.

A man does harm to others by his actions, to himself by his thoughts.

When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

I never trusted God, but I found Him faithful; nor my heart, but I found it false.—Dyck.

It has been observed of Phocion, that he never appeared elated in prosperity or dejected in adversity; he never betrayed partiality by a tear, or joy by a smile.

We know of no cure for jealousy except good sense. Jealousy, when it is not a species of insanity due to physical disease, is the result of selfishness joined to weakness of intellect and character.

St. Chrysostom says that the lips which have received the blessed sacrament are specially powerful against the devil. It was after the breaking of bread that the disciples at Emmaus had their eyes opened and knew him.

Cherfulness is an excellent wearing quality. It was called the bright weather of the heart. It gives harmony to the soul, and is a perpetual song without words. It is tantamount to repose. It enables nature to recruit its strength, whereas worry and discontent debilitate it, involving constant wear and tear.

We deceive ourselves if we think that we must be right, if we grieve those whom God is discipling. (See Zech. i. 15.) We are more commonly, perhaps, in God's mind, and act as the living vessels of the Spirit, when soothing such. Had Job's former friends known God's way, they would not have left him.—Anonymous.

Experience is indeed a strong demonstration, and it is such a witness as leaves no room for debate; for here the truth is felt, proved, and acted on the heart, which the Christian knoweth well, and is as sure of, as he is persuaded that he liveth, or that the sun, when it shineth, hath life and warmth therewith. It is true, the world

It is said that Dr. Chalmers once entertained a distinguished guest from Switzerland, whom he asked if he would be helped to kippered salmon. The foreign divine asked the meaning of the uncouth word "kippered," and was told that it meant "preserved." Soon after the poor man made use of this newly-acquired expression in a public prayer, when he offered a petition that the distinguished divine might long be "kippered to the Free Church of Scotland."

liveth at a great distance with this; they only converse with the sound of such a thing; and we know the naked theory of Scripture-truth had but a short reach, and that it differs as far from that which a serious practical Christian hath, as the sight of a country in a map is from the real discovery of the same; where the difference is not in the degree, but in the kind.—Bleming.

Well, Christ is in heaven, our true treasure, whither neither the thief, nor moth, nor canker can come. This is our happiness, that He keepeth our treasure; it is out of the reach of devils and men; were it in our hands we would soon betray it. If we are set in heaven with Christ, Christ may as soon be pulled out of heaven as we disappointed of our inheritance.—Bain.

The man who in the ministry has never yet had a good, hard bang from somebody about something in the line of his duty, must draw the truth very fine and evaporate it to the thinnest vapor. For God's truth is living, keen, piercing, exposing; and whose character is taken on from the Word he preaches will not be apt to prophesy smooth things, and he will not always travel over smooth roads.

The grand difference between the Christian and the man of the world is, that the burden of the one is gathering as he proceeds, while the other is becoming lighter and more easy; the man of carnal mind and worldly affections cling more and more to the earth, and new cares thicken around his death-bed; his burden is collecting as he advances, and when he comes to the edge of the grave it bears him down to the bottom like a millstone. But the blessed Spirit, by gradually elevating the Christian's temper and desires, makes oh, hence more easy and delightful, until he mounts in the presence of God, where he finds it a service of perfect freedom.—Charles Wolfe.

In the present beholding the glory of Christ, the life and power of faith are most eminently acted; and from this exercise of faith doth love unto Christ Principally (if not solely) arise and spring. If, therefore, we desire faith in its vigor, or love in its power, giving rest, complacency, and satisfaction to our own souls, we are to seek for them in the diligent discharge of this duty; elsewhere they will not be found. Herein would I live, hereon would I die; herein would I dwell in my thoughts and affections, to the withering and consumption of all the painted beauties of this world, unto the crucifying all things here below, until they become unto me a dead and deformed thing, no way meet for affectionate embraces.—Dr. Owen.

Every man should aim to do one thing well. If he dissipates his attention on several objects, he may have excellent talents bestowed to him, but they will be trusted to no good end. Concentrated on his proper object, they might have a vast energy, but dissipated on several, they will have none. Let other objects be pursued, and only so far as they may subserve the main purpose. By neglecting this rule, I have seen frivolity and titillating trifles on minds of great power; and, by regarding it, I have seen very limited minds acting in the first rank of their profession. I have seen a large capital and great stock dissipated, and the man reduced to beggary; and I have seen a small capital and stock improved to great riches.—Cecil.