

words." The same word is, for the sake of variety, translated "immediately" and "forthwith." Notice how often it occurs in this lesson. Here it means that on the very next Sabbath after his arrival in the town he went into the synagogue. This was his custom. (Luke 4: 16.) **The Synagogue**—Jesus paid great respect to the synagogue service. In connection with it he wrought many of his most notable miracles, and from its pulpit uttered most of his teachings. The service consisted in reading assigned portions of Scripture, reciting long prayers, and listening to the "dry-as-dust" commentaries of the rabbis. Sometimes discussion enlivened the proceedings, and arguments were even carried to a violent conclusion. There was no singing, unless the monotonous recitation of the psalms and prayers may be classed as praise. A brighter service befits the Christian Church, the keynote of whose worship was given by the angels on the plains of Bethlehem. Notice, Jesus never staid away from church because the singing was poor or the sermon dull. **Taught**—The fact that church members are not what they ought to be, and church affairs are not conducted according to our notion, is no reason why we should refuse to take up work for Christ in connection with any department that may offer itself. The more reason why we should follow Jesus' example and try to show others a more excellent way.

22. Astonished—See the same effect produced by the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7: 28, 29). **One that had authority**—He claimed to be sufficient authority for what he uttered, and did not quote learned rabbis as justifying his statements. He assumed the right of explaining, modifying or repealing the laws of Moses, and of instituting virtually new commandments of his own. The highest sanction which he attaches to his words is "Verily, verily I say unto you." He dealt with the weightiest matters of the law, and his words awoke the slumbering consciences of the people. What he said was so plainly true that it was recognized as "the word of God." (Luke 5: 1). **The Scribes**—called "lawyers" (Matt. 22: 35), and "doctors" (Luke 5: 17). They transcribed copies of the Scriptures, and made them their special study. They observed and handed down the "traditions of the elders."

23. In their synagogue—implying that there was but one in the place. **A man with an unclean spirit**—"a man in the power of an unclean spirit;" lit. "in an unclean spirit," under its influence, controlled by it, as we say "in drink" or "in love." This was not an insane man, nor a specially bad man, but one over whom satan had obtained mysterious power. Probably he was like others most of the time, except when the "fit" came on him. It is not possible within the space here allowable to discuss the vexed question of demoniacal possession. The following points, however, will cover the ground: (1) Our Lord himself refers the possession to

satanic agency (Luke 10: 17-19; 11: 14-22). (2) He does not infer that the victim is morally responsible for his condition. One at least was so "of a child" (Mark 9: 21). (3) The satanic influence was upon the body and rational nature, not upon the soul, or essential moral being. The patient was under a "clairvoyant" influence. With the wonders of hypnotism and mesmerism before us, we cannot pronounce such an influence of an evil spirit over the man as incredible. (4) "Possession" was commonly accompanied by bodily infirmity, such as dumbness, deafness, blindness, epilepsy, insanity, etc. (Matt. 9: 32; 12: 22; Mark 9: 17-27; 5: 1-5). (5) If it is said that medical men of the time called some forms of insanity "possession," and Jesus conformed to the prevailing opinion, we must add that he went much farther than silent acquiescence in an erroneous belief. He could not have given clearer positive testimony that he shared the opinion referred to. We cannot maintain our Saviour's truthfulness and infallible knowledge without conceding that there were cases of actual subjection of the human body and will to demoniacal control. Superintendents of asylums for the insane are not by any means prepared to say that there are no similar cases at the present day. All evil spirits were "unclean" in a moral sense. They seem to have produced a corresponding outward degradation on their victims. **He cried out**—i. e. against Christ. Expostulated loudly. The demon used the vocal organs of the man and so the man is said to have "cried out."

24. Let us alone—This is the translation of an interjection (*ea*) expressive of surprise and displeasure. "Like a criminal when he feels the hand of the officer of justice on his arm, implying a certain fearful looking for of judgment." (Lindsay.) It is omitted in the R. V., since it is believed to have been a "reminiscence" of the transcriber from Luke 4: 34. The best manuscripts do not have it here. The demon speaks for himself and all of his kind. "Demons make a common cause with each other. (Bengel.) **What have we to do with thee**—lit. "what is there to us and thee." "This seems to mean 'Have we injured thee?' (Compare 1 Kings 17: 18.) By this the spirit meant to say that if Jesus cast him out, he would use an improper interference. But this was untrue. The possession of the man was a direct assault on God and his works. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and he had a right, therefore, to liberate the captive, and to punish him who had possessed him. All that Satan wants still is to be let alone." (Barnes.) Jesus used this same form of expression to his mother, but with a very different shade of meaning. (John 2: 4). **To destroy us**—It had a presentiment of coming doom. (Matt. 8: 29.) The final destruction of Satan's power is the end of Christ's mission. The demons are destroyed as injurers of mankind, when they are sent back to the place "prepared"